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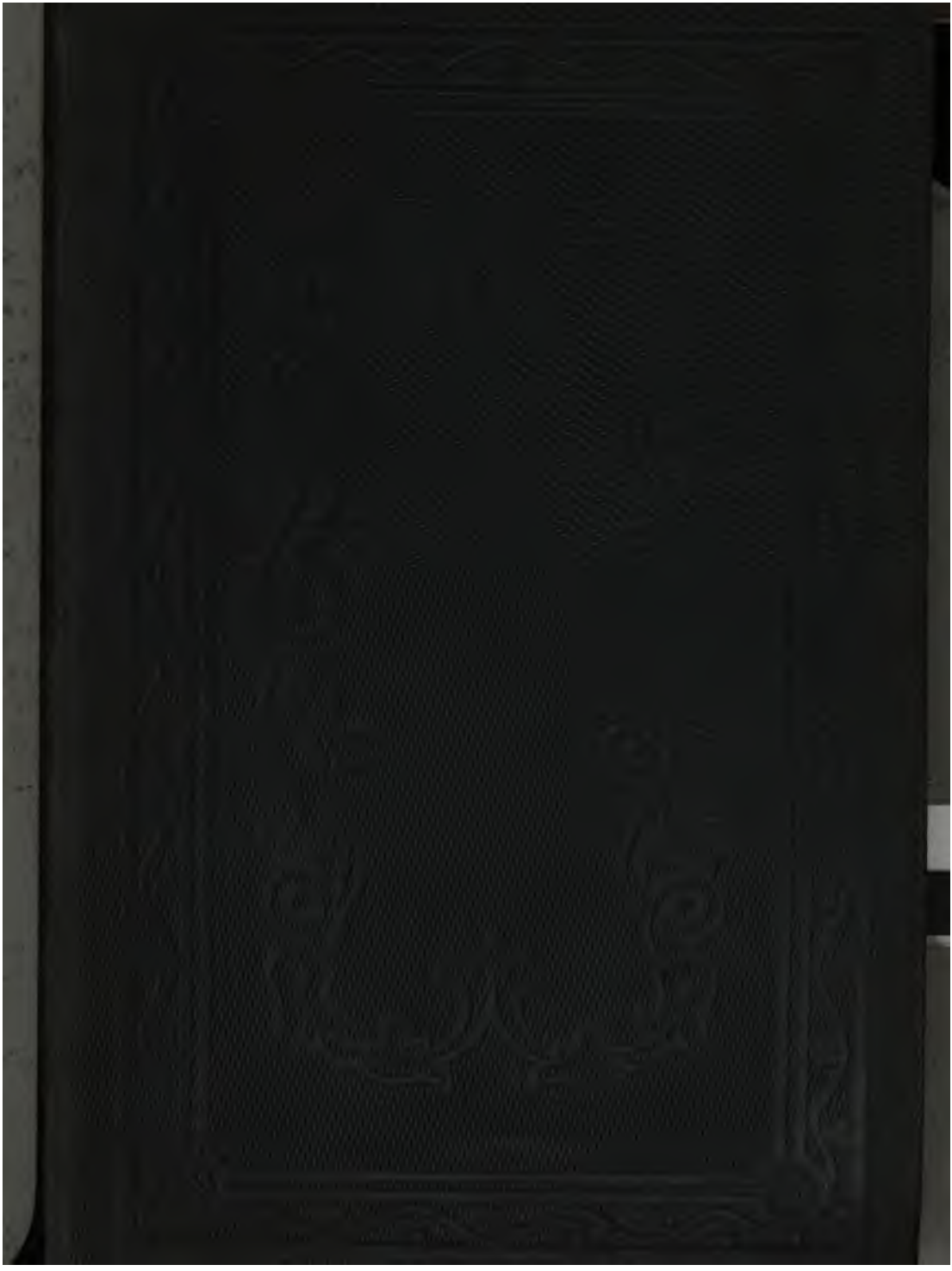
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ADOLPHE RENOUARD:

A Tale of

LIFE IN FRANCE.





THE PARTY AT M. BOISSON'S.

ADOLPHE RENOUARD:

OR

PEASANT LIFE & POLITICAL CLUBS IN FRANCE.

By JAMES WARD,

AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD IN ITS WORKSHOPS," ETC.

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ADOLPHE AND MARIE.

With numerous Engravings.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE object of the following tale is to reveal the internal workings of the political and social institutions of France. The writer has chosen the Revolution of 1848 as the incident of his tale, because it brought out in stronger relief the character, the feelings, and the opinions of the working classes, and showed the precise line of demarcation between them and the classes immediately above them. The causes that produced those feelings and opinions are still in operation, and cannot fail ultimately to produce results of a still more startling and afflicting nature. We allude to the minute division of the soil, which is ever at war with the accumulation of property, and is continually restricting the resources for the employment of labour. The disproportion between the means of employment and the numbers who require it, must strike every one who has even cursorily studied the condition of France; but to the close observer—to those who, like the writer, have sojourned long in that country, and have made the subject an especial object of study—it suggests a train of thought which leads to the solution of the difficulties that surround it.

The mistake which the social architects of the first Revolution committed, was in enacting the *compulsory division of the soil*, although the people at large regarded this alteration in the law as the means which would in time realize their dream of a *partage égal des biens et des revenus*—of that universal equality which would consist in all sharing alike in the wealth and income of the country. But had the legislators themselves ever contemplated the consummation of such a *régime*, they would certainly have provided for the interrupted process, and the final stability of the work, by securing property against *mortgage*. From this, however, they abstained; and France, under the operation of its *partage égal des héritages* during little more than half a century, has been split into thirteen million titles, encumbered with mortgages amounting to thirteen milliards of francs, or 520 millions of our money!

The agriculture of France—which should do more than support itself; for, by the laws of nature, agriculture is the *origin* of all capital, and in every civilized country is capable of acquiring some savings of income which supply capital for other pursuits—has been a continual drain upon the resources of the country. Instead of contributing anything from its savings to the extension of commerce, the facilities of trade, or the progress of manufactures, it has required an annual subsidy, from the other branches of the community, of not less than ten millions sterling, for which the soil has no more to show than the sandy desert of Sahara has of last year's showers. The result of this fearful

experiment, of attempting to elevate the lower orders by destroying the aristocracy,—without which it was as impossible for a middle class to grow up under a monarchy, as without a lower class itself,—was sufficiently manifest under Louis Philippe's reign. The influence of real property was so *pulverized*, if I may use the expression, by the attempt to bring about the fondly cherished principle of *equality*, that a people of 35,000,000 only furnished 200,000 electors, while the Crown fed 60,000 placemen, and was supported by 400,000 men-at-arms!

From the preceding remarks, it will readily be inferred that France, so long as she is under the influence of the pernicious law of a compulsory division of property, cannot relieve herself from the mass of poverty which drains her resources, and threatens periodically her political and social vitality. It is from this surging mass of poverty, that her towns are continuously filled with the elements of revolutionary outbreaks, and which furnish the characters we have attempted to illustrate in the following tale. Adolphe Renouard, André Jacquot, and Gaspard Ferrete, are but types of some thousands of individuals which, more or less, are numbered amongst the industrial classes of France.

J. W.

LONDON, *30th Nov.* 1852.

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ADOLPHE RENOUARD.

CHAPTER I.

"Ye sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,
By uproars sever'd like a flight of fowl;
Scattered by winds and high tempestuous gusts,
Oh, let me teach you how to knit again
This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf—
These broken limbs again into one body."

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

IN the little village of Autun, in the commune of Artois, lived and had lived, for sixty years, Jean Renouard. Jean was one of that class which is rare in England, though we have something analogous to it in the Arcadian notion of a forty-shilling freeholder; that is to say, Jean was a *petit proprietaire* of about six acres of land, which he occupied himself, and upon which he contrived to live without any other industrial resource. In Switzerland such a man would have been a weaver, or a watchmaker, as well as a farmer; and in England he would have found additional employment on the larger farms of the parish; but for poor Jean, in France, there were no such opportunities. There were no manufactures within the commune; nor in the village was any farm larger than his own, though many were considerably less. Indeed, Jean was comparatively rich, for he

kept a cow, and, what is more, a horse; though it would hardly have passed muster for a horse in this country, even with a sand-boy.

The English reader will suppose that Jean's little farm must have been beautifully cultivated; and especially when we inform him that Jean, besides his own pair of hands, had two well-grown sons to assist him. But such was far from being the case. The fences just defined the limits of his little estate, without affording it any protection; and the standing corn grew thin and wiry on the ridges, and refused to grow altogether in the furrows. The bit of fallow lay in lumps, matted together by twitch-weed; and in the meadow the mown grass lay in almost imperceptible swaths, foreboding a winter of sad privation to the two already half-starved animals, whose condition showed that they were too well accustomed to such scanty provision.

Was Jean, then, a sluggard? Or were his two hulking sons content to share the old man's loaf, without sharing in his labour? No; father and sons alike toiled from sunrise to sunset upon the sulky soil, and heroically too, for they never expected any better return from it. Why should they? Why should they expect more than their neighbours, whose little plots were, all around for miles, as stubborn and as unproductive as their own?

It is now about thirty years since I first visited Jean's commune. Wars, and even rumours of wars, had then ceased; and all had become reconciled to the peaceful pursuits of a laborious industry. The soil was gradually recovering from the neglect of a quarter of a century; for although the iron heel of the enemy had not defaced it during the horrible ravages to which every fair portion of the continent, except France, had been exposed, the merciless conscription had proved more injurious to it than fire and sword: yes, if the soil of France was so long sacred from invasion, while Frenchmen were devastating the soil of every other country into which they could cut their way, it paid dearly





THE SUNDAY VILLAGE DANCE.

for the security and repose which it enjoyed. The blood which was shed at Marengo or Austerlitz did not fertilize the fields of France. The false patriotism of the people, and the false glory of their ruler, blinded both to the madness of a conscription, which desolated their own country in order to carry desolation into others; and France herself was fast becoming a desert while endeavouring to conquer, by depopulating, the world! Bootless security! Fatal repose! Better that the rich harvest had been trodden down, or given to conflagration on the soil, for that would have been a fructifying devastation; and the truly patriotic soil—oh, that matter should be thus superior to mind!—would have avenged itself on the barbarity of its enemies by yielding twofold and threefold to its sons when the storm of invasion should have passed away. The soil abhors such repose as tyrants and conquerors can bestow upon it. *Solitudinem faciunt—pacem appellant!* Other conquerors have inflicted this cruel mockery upon the countries they have subdued: Napoleon *inflicted it upon his own!*

But the fields of Autun, as I have said, were now recovering from the long neglect to which the conscription had doomed them; and everything indicated the gradual progress of rural prosperity. It was on a Sunday afternoon that I entered the village; the devotions of the day had been duly discharged, and now all was rustic gaiety and mirth. In the midst of the *Place*, the lads and lasses were "dancing to tire each other down," to the music of three tolerable violins; while the damsels, with their *prétendus*, or lovers, were chaffering for ribands at the stall of an eloquent *marchand en boutique*, joking with the good natured *gendarme*, or holding filial-like converse with the aged curé. Yes, reader; be not shocked that the aged pastor was there, watching with placid delight the innocent gambols of his flock, and enhancing their pleasures, as at other times he soothed their sorrows, by his sympathy.

The curé, like him of Veretz, described by Paul Louis Courier, was a sensible and well-informed man, verging upon fourscore, and yet fond of youth, and too reasonable to wish to reform them according to the pattern of a by-gone age, or to rule them in the spirit of the bulls of Boniface or Hildebrand. It was before his door that they danced, and mostly in his presence. So far from rebuking these amusements, he made himself a party to them; rightly judging that the influence of his presence, and the respect with which he was invested, would impart to them additional propriety and virtuousness. Wise and truly pious pastor! May his example be followed for the comfort of the poor, and the edification of his fellow-creatures, and the repose of his commune; where his prudence kept all in peace, in calm, in union, and concord!

The history of this amiable man, as he imparted it to me himself, was a simple but interesting one. He was a cadet of the seignorial family which had once reigned over the commune as feudal lords. He had been originally educated for the Church, with a view to the rich benefice of the commune; but the Revolution came, and, while it swept away all the rest of his family, left him, by the decree of March 1790, a poor rector, with only twelve hundred francs a year, exclusive of his glebe-house and garden. He was, even at that time, past the meridian of life, and he had therefore tasted of its luxuries; but he had scarcely ever regretted them, except when his poverty stood in the way of his charity.

"It must be a great satisfaction to you, my good curé," I observed to him one day, "to have lived to see the Restoration."

"What makes you think so?" he replied. "You do not suppose that I covet—much less expect—the restoration of anything which once belonged to me?"

"No," I returned. "I was thinking of anything less than that. But is it nothing to see the restoration of that moral simplicity

of manners, which was once so fearfully corrupted by the revolutionary contagion, which for a season infected all France?"

The curé shook his head, and sighed.

"You have fallen into a very common error, my friend," he said, after a pause. "There are few things, indeed, of all that the Revolution has effaced, which I should wish to see restored; and last of all, the simplicity of rural manners, which you imagine to have distinguished the *old régime*. Before the Revolution came, like a tempest to purify the land, it was afflicted with a worse plague than the plague of locusts in Egypt: the land swarmed with beggars, with human beings, who were regarded by the lords of the soil as destructive and as offensive as vermin! The high roads and avenues to towns—for a cordon was drawn round to prevent their incursions—were infested with them: the châteaus and convents were perpetually besieged by them. Locusts, did I say? They were to the class who fared sumptuously, and who were clothed in fine linen, as the plague of lice! And then, as to those whom the dissipation of the noblesse could still afford to support in a state of serfdom on the land, read La Bruyère's too faithful description of them. 'By day,' he says, 'scattered over our fields, you may see certain wild animals, male and female, black, livid, naked and sun-burnt, tearing up the soil with invincible perseverance. They utter articulate sounds, like human beings, and when they stand upright exhibit a human countenance; and, in fact, they are human beings. At night they retire to their dens, where they live on black bread, water, and roots.' Do you think, my friend, that there could be much rural simplicity of manners amongst a population like this?"

"And how do you account," I asked, "for the great improvement which has taken place in their moral and physical condition?"

"Physically," he replied, "the improvement is easily accounted for. Remember how we have been thinned, and to what extent

the soil has, by a momentous experiment in legislation, been set free to the independent possession of labour. And morally, too, the Revolution and the events which sprang from it have done good. They have shaken out of the French peasant all the *insouciance* and indolence which centuries of abject and hopeless dependence had engendered in him. They have sharpened not only his wits, but his senses. If he has been doomed to suffer, suffering has taught him to enjoy; and if you see him now so blithe and so happy in the bosom of his family and friends, it is the recollection of the cruel separations to which he was formerly doomed, which mainly contributes to make him so."

"Henceforth, then," I observed, with a smile, "we may expect him to become a peaceable citizen of the world, if the world will only allow him to be at peace. I think I can say as much for my own humble countrymen."

"*That* will depend upon the ultimate result of the legislative experiment to which I have alluded," he replied. "Hitherto, the continued sub-division of the soil, enforced by our law of inheritance, has done much good, because it has given competence to many at the expense of the few. But I fear, that when competence comes to be split into shares, as opulence has been, all will alike labour under an ever-decreasing insufficiency, until general poverty will be the result. Indeed, I see something of this already. Fifteen years hence, when all the patriarchs of the present generation are gone, I fear that the evil will become more imminent, and that the legislative power will not have the courage, or the power, to arrest it."

"And in fifteen years more——" I interposed.

"I shudder, at times," he said, "when I consider what must be the consequences. Depend upon this, sir,—all revolutions in modern times, may be traced to some rottenness in the foundation of society. If the moral and material condition of the masses be sound, their mere existence is a barrier against any

violent change ; but these once undermined, any bold and mischievous hand may precipitate the whole body politic into confusion. And what I apprehend from the present material condition of the great masses in France (who comprise nearly three-fourths of the entire population) is, *that it cannot last.* Insolvency is already undermining it."

I expressed my astonishment that people, seemingly so frugal and industrious, should be guilty of such wretched economy as to encumber themselves with debt.

"Yes," he continued, "they are both temperate and laborious ; but, unfortunately, it is one of the worst effects of our law of succession, that on the death of every proprietor, the land is too frequently subjected to a fresh mortgage. That law, in fact, is at war with a passion which prevails in all civilized communities—a passion for the possession and acquisition of property in the soil. On the death of the parent, the law compels an equal distribution of the land, or its value, amongst the children ; while the eldest, or some member of the family, will make any sacrifice to preserve it from division, as much as possible. He is anxious to buy up the shares of his co-heirs ; but he has no capital for the purchase, and the usurious mortgagee is his only resource. And the same thing occurs whenever there is a plot of land in the market. There are twenty competitors for it, not one of whom has the means to pay for it, except by mortgaging what he already possesses. Before the period you have named—thirty years hence—unless the State forbears from compelling this arbitrary division of the soil, it will be parcelled out amongst millions of pauper proprietors, who will be encumbered with a mortgage-debt, as heavy as the national debt of Great Britain. And this is not all. It will be impossible for agriculture to flourish under such an incubus ; and the produce of the soil will gradually diminish as the burdens upon it increase. Indeed, this is perceptible already. Our live stock, which should replenish

the soil, is disappearing; and every year there is a greater breadth brought into tillage. And how can it be otherwise, when the needy heir of a few acres will part with even his last cow, to obtain a greater share of the patrimony than the law will allow him to take by inheritance?"

"Surely," I observed, "the statesmen of France will recognise and remedy such an evil, before it becomes altogether incurable."

"Hem!" replied the curé, with a smile; "we have plenty of statists—we have always been famous for them; but *statesmen*, in the true sense of the term, we could never boast much of. They do not, with us, profess to study the cause of the wealth of nations, as they do with you. If they can keep Paris and the other great centres of population quiet, they think they have achieved all that is comprehended under the category of good government. They pay very little attention to the simple villager's welfare; and in a few years they will pay still less, for we are daily losing all political consideration in the State. The sub-division of the soil is disfranchising us hourly."

"And if your simple villagers are contented with their political insignificance," I observed, "do you not think that their exemption from party strife is a positive addition to their happiness?"

"Perhaps it is," he replied, "*for the present;* and 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' But the time may come when their indifference may prove dangerous to the State. The spirit of our large towns, which engross all political influence, is especially democratic; and the time is coming, when that of the agricultural classes will be democratic too, or *anything* for a change."

"On the contrary, one would have supposed," I remarked, "that their mode of life—their continuous occupation—their domestic habits, and above all, their isolation from the political world—would have strongly prejudiced them against anything like innovation."

"You must not judge of my countrymen by your own," he

returned. "There is this striking difference between them: that the rural population of France have no traditions to prejudice them in favour of established institutions; and when there are no traditions, there can be none of those instinctive attachments which are repugnant to changes. Amongst us, everything is new. Our old men know nothing of a *constitutional* monarchy, and our young men, nothing of monarchy of any sort."

"Still, though they may not comprehend the theory, or care much about the working of their present constitution," I rejoined, "I do not see how their ignorance or apathy can prove dangerous to it, so long as they are contented with their condition."

"But how long," observed the curé, "will they remain so?"

"As long as the State abstains from oppressing them," I replied.

"Exactly so," was the answer; "remember that the State may oppress the people as much by even popular laws, if they are unwise laws, as by the most arbitrary acts of spoliation. When the people find themselves universally impoverished, their impatience of the system will not permit them very nicely to analyze its errors. In nine cases out of ten, the fundamental error has been one which they fondly cherish as a peculiar privilege or blessing—a *popular* error, with which it would be almost perilous for the government to interfere. You see something of this kind at home in your Poor Law. Your legislature know, that while it is robbing the owner of all beneficial property in the soil, it is reducing the masses of the lower orders to universal and depraving pauperism; and yet they fear to create a revolt by reforming it. Fatal as that law is to industry, the working classes cling to it as their *Magna Charta*. Enacted in the spirit of charity, and jealously cherished by your agricultural labourers as their natural inheritance, it has been the source of all their degradation, and of all the oppressive

laws which have been found necessary to curb the licentious spirit which it has engendered. No possible despotism of modern days could have rendered their condition so dangerous and so wretched as that well-meaning and most popular law."

"But you have no Poor Law here," I observed.

"No," he continued, "we have no Poor Law; but we too have had our *vota dies ex audita malignis;* and though the gratification of its desires is hastening society to its dissolution, the legislature dare not dash the poisonous cup from our lips."

"You allude again to your law of inheritance; but if the people are so attached to it, I do not see how the government can incur their resentment or dislike by abstaining from meddling with it."

"It is their blind attachment to this law," he replied, "which will create all the danger. They will not believe that it has produced the monstrous evils which it will most assuredly entail upon them: all their suffering will be ascribed to misgovernment. And if the opulent landed gentry of England groan under a Poor Law tax of six or seven millions a year, what will be the disposition of the pauper *propriétaire* of France under a mortgage-debt four or five times as great? Do you not think—as there are no dynastical or constitutional *prestiges* to keep them in the straight path of loyalty and order—that they will accept any change in the hope of ridding themselves of this intolerable burden in the scuffle?"

I walked silently by the curé's side for some distance, musing upon the melancholy future which he foreboded for his country. At length, wishing to draw him round to the brightest side of the picture—the present—I said, "At any rate, my dear curé, you may thank God that all is as yet innocence, cheerfulness, and repose."

"But how long will *that* last, even in my own little commune?" he asked; "and from how many once happy spots has it not been already banished by mistaken zeal or bigoted intolerance!"

"You surprise me," I exclaimed. "Surely no one would be mad enough to undertake a crusade against the harmless recreations of such an unsophisticated people!"

"It is even so," he replied, with a deep sigh. "You would see much more of it further south; but even here the society has its missionaries. How long their secret influences will prevail at court, I know not; but if they make their footing sure in that quarter they will extinguish every spark of religion in the country."

"I always thought," I observed, "that they were men of an austere example, and rigorous in exacting religious observances to a fault."

"Yes," he returned; "their fanaticism is unsparing; they have undertaken nothing less than what you call a crusade—a spiritual crusade to subjugate the whole people under their yoke—and a heavy yoke it is. The French villager is constitutionally of a pious cast; but his devotion is of a cheerful, hoping, confiding character. His heaven is a heaven of sunshine; but these young Jesuits, who now monopolize every vacant cure, would discipline him on earth for a heaven of gloom. They will permit no *réunions* on Sunday evenings and saint days, for the innocent dance or open and honest courtship; for I should tell you that wherever a seminarist has taken up his abode, the préfet and gendarme are entirely under his control. They forbid all manly games, anathematize the harmless scrapers of catgut, place *cabarets* under a ban, and banish the poor *ambulants* with their trinkets and finery; and worst of all, they have revived, in all its exacting despotism, the moral counterpart of the Inquisition—the Confessional."

"And what has been the result?"

"Why, the women have become unhappy, and the men cross and brutal. For the latter there is no longer any pastime abroad, or any comfort at home. They abandon the house of God alto-

gether, because they cannot endure the sight of His minister—and, in fact, are becoming downright reprobates in disgust. Believe me, sir, that there is no tyranny so galling to a man as the tyranny of religion, when it is practised upon him through the woman he loves. The Jesuit catches every word she whispers into his ear—marks every mute expression of tenderness and passion—and the husband cannot avenge himself upon the licensed spy on the dearest secrets of his heart. As for the poor damsels, they yield to the spiritual spell, and are miserable; and the men can hardly believe that the curious confessor improves their purity by skilfully catechizing them as to their proficiency in sin. Sweet and sanctified indeed is the confession of a heart overflowing with penitence and remorse; but extorted inquisitively and wantonly, it is as suggestive of as many evil thoughts and loose desires as Satan could have insinuated into the ear of our mother Eve."

"You think, then, that the religious character of your humbler countrymen will be damaged by this vexatious and fruitless attempt at spiritually enslaving them?"

"Not only their religious, but their moral and domestic character will be irretrievably damaged, if the persecution be continued long. And most unwisely has the government acted in the matter, by placing the temporal at the disposal of the spiritual authority. The préfet and the gendarme, who disperse a dance, or close a cabaret at the bidding of the seminarist, instead of being looked up to as protectors, are regarded as tyrants; and as they both derive their power from the government, the government itself becomes obnoxious and hateful."

"What can be the motive," I inquired, "for this movement on the part of the restored dynasty?"

"The truth is," he answered, "that the men of the Restoration are extremely ignorant of the state of public feeling. I do not say of public opinion, for there exists none—in the rural districts. After an absence of a quarter of a century, they have

brought back with them nothing but the remembrance of the agrarian outrages, by which the peasantry revenged their long oppression during the sudden frenzy of the Revolution; and it is fashionable error to attribute all the excesses which distinguished that remarkable crisis to the infidel doctrines of the encyclopædists. I doubt whether the encyclopædists—the school of Voltaire, Bressen, and D'Alembert—would not have written in vain, even to the higher classes in France, had they not already been thoroughly demoralized by the corruption and licentiousness of the court. The encyclopædists only interpreted, and, if I may so say, *formularized*, the practical infidelity which had long been the secret charm of fashionable society before it could be decently avowed, and was the *national religion* of our salons, our coteries, and our learned professions, far anterior to its open propagation as a creed. But the contamination was only infectious in the atmospheres of cities, where a loose and sketchy education just qualified the higher orders for the reception of a meretricious and convenient philosophy, and where the lower classes, without affecting to understand the *spiritual* speculations of the scoffers, could not fail to be infected by the gross immorality which they ultimately licensed in the public conduct of the *beau monde*. But the peasantry were protected from the infection by the wretched state of ignorance which was an unavoidable characteristic of their servile condition. The encyclopædists might as well have preached Budhism in an unknown language, as materialism in French, to us people who could neither read nor think. The National Assembly themselves did not fall into the mistake of supposing that they were ripe for the extirpation of religion; and while they destroyed the political power and confiscated the possessions of the church, they made a provision for the continuance of its religious observances."

"Religion, then," I observed, "never died utterly out of the land, as we have been in the habit of supposing?"

"No," he replied; "and in this respect the emigrants greatly, though perhaps not wilfully, misrepresented us to you. Infidel France is a reproach which, I admit, was too truly applicable to our urban populations—as, I fear, it is now; but upon the rural classes it was, and is, a most unjustifiable libel."

"How, then, do you account," I asked, "for the exultation with which they hailed the spoliation of the church?"

"They exulted," he answered, "not over the spoliation of the church—for the church, so far as the service of religion was concerned, had little to be spoiled of. The working clergy were nearly as poor as they are now. But the church, independent of its religious ministry, was, in the persons of its cardinals, its bishops, and its abbés, the greatest landed proprietor in the kingdom. The extent of their possessions may be conceived from the fact that their revenues amounted to nearly fifty millions of your money. If the peasant re-echoed the horrible cry, '*Les évêques à la lanterne*,' he was thinking, not of the ministers of religion, but of the most oppressive among the absolute lords of the soil. Can there be a stronger proof that impatience of religious restraints had nothing to do with their hostility to its wealth, than the fact, that since the working clergy have been reduced to the condition of pensionaries of the State, their pensions have been almost universally increased by the voluntary contributions of their parishioners? Even in my little commune a purse of two hundred francs is collected yearly for its pastor."

"I was not aware of this," I remarked. "It is the most promising feature in your social condition with which, as yet, I have become acquainted."

"But it does not satisfy our brethren of the Society of Jesus," he continued. "It is not a state of things which suits the views of their order. They have persuaded the court that the innocent amusements with which our cheerful villagers follow up their

devotional exercises will, in course of time, seduce them into the supposed old sin of infidelity—that, without a serious and self-humbling faith, the poor and the ignorant are incapable of a settled and self-sacrificing loyalty—and that, unless their levity in religious concerns is corrected by an anti-revolutionary movement against Sunday pastimes and saint-day fêtes, the authority of the Church, and next the authority of the State, will be brought into contempt. Foolish men! As if the poor did not regard their pastimes and their recreations as the most precious of their liberties! But the ambition of these men, grasping as it is, has ever been a short-sighted one. With all their powers of insinuation in court and conclave, they have never found their way to the hearts of the people. Since the days of Loyola they have never succeeded, except with savages and heathens, in acquiring a predominant influence with the masses through the only channels to their confidence—their affections, or their credulity. Amidst functions and intrigues, their address is irresistible, because there they work upon the passions and the selfishness of their dupes. But for the *people*, they have nothing but fetters for the spirit, and self-denial for the flesh. To the rich, they offer power; to the poor, the most intolerable of all slaveries; and it is no wonder, therefore, that while kings and nobles are fascinated by the services they can confer, the people—who, although thoroughly ambitious, are jealous of the few enjoyments which fall to their lot—are exasperated and disgusted by the discipline which they would exact. A new race of encyclopædists would be incapable of doing a thousandth part of the injury to religion and loyalty which this new crusade of the Jesuits will inflict upon them, unless it be speedily suppressed."

CHAPTER II.

Our tale commences some sixteen or seventeen years after the date of my first visit to Autun. The good curé and his co-patriarchs had all been gathered to the resting-place of their forefathers; and Jean Renouard, whom I remembered a hale and hearty man, not much past the meridian of life, had become a patriarch of the village in his turn.

But this was not the only change observable; for the curé's melancholy forebodings of the gradual degradation of the peasant proprietary of France had been realized with frightful rapidity. The subdivision of the soil had been continually going on, in obedience to the revolutionary law of inheritance—a law, which, for its efficacy in seducing mankind to their ruin, by humouring the most senseless of their affections, might have originated with the father of all mischief himself.

What a strange passion—so universal in its influence, so unscrupulous in spirit, and so blind to more solid advantages—is this passion for the possession of the soil! There is a three-cornered piece of waste land by the road-side, which has been abandoned as worthless for centuries, except when the vagabond gipsy has periodically pitched his tent under the thickset hedge which screens it from the wind. In whom is the fee of this neglected spot? No one knows; for it seems to be a spot alike fenced out from the estates of my Lord Oldacres and Mr. Locuples Newcome, which are conterminous. But Mr. Locuples Newcome is a man of to-day, and he hates gipsies, and he has a great fancy for establishing his frontier with palings, and plantations, and

painted denunciations of the "utmost rigour of the law," against trespassers upon the domain, which, in better times, he would doubtless have tabooed with "spring-guns and man-traps.' The three-cornered piece is at last too inviting to be overlooked and Mr. Locuples Newcome proceeds to enclose it, and to christen it, in virtue of a few sickly firs and withering larches, "the Cock'd Hat Plantation." My lord, however, cannot tolerate such assumption; he claims the sacred spot for himself, and clears it by force of the offensive marks of possession planted upon it by his neighbour. The Swiss—the lawyers, I mean—are called in to fight the great battle of the Cock'd Hat Plantation. There are trials, and new trials, and motions for more new trials, and writs of error, apparently without end, until, at last, my lord or the squire drops into his grave, and the suit drops too, "pregnant of parties," but only to be raised again by another generation of litigants, until the Cock'd Hat Plantation eventually ruins them both. But should not the State interfere, to prevent such mad disputes for a perch or two of the soil? What sort of example do states set? Is not their madness more absurd and more mischievous than even that of my Lord Oldacres and Mr. Locuples Newcome? There is a slip of territory west of the Rhine—how many myriads of lives and millions of money have been sacrificed in sanguinary struggles for its possession! It is on the French side of the river, and France covets it as her national boundary; but it is inhabited by a race who are German in their sympathies and language, and Germany claims it by the ties of consanguinity; and all Europe has been more than once called to arms to decide to which shall belong the prize, and after it has been decided another war soon revives the dispute? But this, perhaps, is only peculiar to the mad ambition of princes, or to the crowded states of the Old World, who are compelled to elbow each other out of

every patch of debateable ground, in order to find room for their expanding populations? Not at all. Cross the Atlantic, and observe the march of the great experimental Republic, which is to teach the old world the folly of aggrandizing despotisms. Between her inhabited frontier and the Rocky Mountains, there is unoccupied space sufficient for the establishment of empires—sufficient to accommodate the growth of centuries. But this is not enough. She would fain secure the reversion of all between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific, and with a *caveat emptor* against European immigration, menaces the prospective appropriation of the other half of the new world, from the Isthmus of Panama to the Straits of Magellan!

Although, therefore, the present proprietary of France could not but be sensible that their condition had been gradually growing worse for the last twenty years, and although it would have required no remarkable powers of reasoning to conclude *à priori* that such would be the inevitable result of their law of inheritance, it is no wonder that they were disposed to attribute the decline of their little fortunes to any other cause than the real one. This law gratified the general passion for the possession of land, and if the gratification of this passion was attended by difficulties, embarrassments, and poverty, it was only natural for them to cheat themselves into the belief that something else was at the bottom of the mischief. But the equal division of inheritance was not the only agency which had long been at work to split the ownership of the soil into almost infinitesimal fragments. When the soil generally had become so far subdivided, by virtue of that law, that the share of each occupant became insufficient for his support, a general demand arose for additional patches of land, and a class of land-jobbers appeared on the scene, who amazingly accelerated the catastrophe which the law itself would only too soon have brought on without their assistance. By

their intervention, domains were everywhere bought up, and offered for sale, in lots varying from a few perches to an acre; whilst the usurer was always found at the heels of the auctioneer, ready to assist purchasers with the means of encumbering themselves with land, which it was equally beyond their power to pay for or to manage. At the period to which the tale refers, it was not uncommon for the farm of a little *propriétaire* to be made up of half-a-dozen separate plots—the whole not amounting to half as many acres—and each encumbered with a separate mortgage to nearly its marketable value. How can so many fragments be cultivated to advantage?

Such, however, was not the case with Jean Renouard. A victim of the earliest conscription, he had been discharged from military service ere the career of Napoleon began; and when he succeeded, about ten years later, to a portion of the patrimonial estate, it only for the second time underwent the process of division among the children of the previous life-tenant. Jean's grandfather had been the master of a hundred acres, but his father, being only a unit in a family of five children, had received as his heritage no more than twenty, which were again parcelled out to Jean and his three brothers in allotments of five!

I have said that Jean Renouard had two sons to assist him in the cultivation of his farm while he lived, and to divide it between them when he should die. The inheritance which would then fall to each might be regarded as a very scanty provision in this country; but in France their lot was, comparatively to that of many expectant heirs, one to be envied. They would each succeed to more than an entire *hectare*, and the lord of an *hectare* had become, by the rapid partition of the soil, a man of some consideration amongst his fellows.

The two brothers—Jaques and Adolphe—had therefore little occasion to fall out with their stars, or with each other; but, unfortunately, the further division of the patrimonial acres, on the

death of the father, had not always been a contingency for which the elder son had been prepared. For many years he had reasonably regarded himself as the sole heir. Madame Renouard, after the birth of her eldest born, had successively lost several children in their infancy; and then, after a long interval, brought Adolphe into the world—an unlooked-for addition to the family, just when Jaques was of an age to appreciate the advantage of being an only son. Adolphe was now only in his nineteenth year, while Jaques had completed his fortieth.

I have frequently seen instances where this great disparity of age between brothers has been productive of the most pure and enchanting exercise of fraternal affection. The helplessness and artlessness of the "little brother" is so winning, while the care and protection of the elder is so indulgent, that the relations between them seem to be, if not closer and stronger, outwardly more endearing than those between father and son. To see little Benjamin hanging to the skirt of brother Reuben, as he trots along at his heels, with upturned countenance, asking a hundred questions, or telling a hundred stories about what he will do when he is a man; while Reuben listens to his prattle with an agreeable absence of mind, and makes a hundred promises in return, of real guns that will go off, and ponies with long tails, and all the little romances of the future that can excite and delight a child: truly nothing is more charming, for I have felt it. "Dulce est desipere *in loco*," says the philosopher; but it is *never* out of place to play the child with our little brother. The relations between a grown-up girl and her little sister are not half so cheering, because they cannot be so free and unrestrained. The former has always an *anxious* duty to perform—a duty of repression as well as tenderness; but we may safely laugh at the boisterous antics of our little brother; and even if he has "a little of the devil" in him, we may permit, and even provoke, his puny audacity, not only without apprehension, but with pride.

It was not, however, the fortune of little Adolphe to inspire Jaques with such feelings as these. The *fait accompli* presented to Jaques in the birth of a younger brother, was a partner in the patrimony which he had hitherto looked forward to as his own; and as Madame Renouard died within a few months after this unwelcome event, and little Adolphe was put out to nurse, Jaques came to regard him in no better light than he would any other strange child who might have been inopportunely intruded between him and his expectations. As Adolphe grew up, Jaques did not exactly find his presence intolerable; but he would have much preferred that Adolphe had never made his appearance at all; and this feeling was quite enough, without any palpable ill-usage on the part of Jaques, to stifle all brotherly love between them. As Adolphe, moreover, grew up towards man's estate, and began to give himself a man's airs, Jaques found him more than ever in the way; and, though the loss of half the heritage was rendered irreparable to Jaques by the simple fact of Adolphe being born, he would have been much better pleased if Adolphe had taken himself off, like many other cadets of the *petit-propriétaire* families in France, to seek a livelihood in the great centres of industry, until the time for dividing the substance of the father should arrive in the due course of nature.

Nor had the propriety of this step, or rather its desirableness, on his own account, failed to strike Adolphe himself.

"Our father," he said one day to himself, as he was bending his way towards the neighbouring village of Pomiere—"our father seems more melancholy than ever of late. Jaques, too, grows gloomy, and talks of black bread. *Sacristie!* black bread is not half so intolerable as a black look. If Jaques were to go away, I would not budge a step; but no, he is a good fellow, and denies himself wife, and children, and everything that *I* should like, for our father. *Ma foi!* Marie Meulen, I shall never have so much disinterestedness, so much courage, as Jaques.

Sometimes I wish, Marie Meulen, that the conscription, of which our father tells us, would begin again, and force me away from you in spite of myself. Jaques and our father would get on well then; for I am not such a goose as not to know the difference between three sets of teeth at the same loaf, and two. And, *mon Dieu!* to live a bachelor, like poor Jaques, for twenty years to come, with you, Marie, always floating before me!"

"And sometimes behind you," said a merry voice, the speaker suiting the action to the word, and pulling Adolphe saucily by the ear.

"My dear Marie, I did not know—" stuttered the youth, in modest confusion.

"Oh! you don't know what you have been blabbing to the best company in the world—your own dear self," interrupted the maiden. "But *I* know, and that is quite enough for both of us. You don't like black bread; you are going to flee from the world, your sulky brother, black bread, and *me! Fi-donc*, Adolphe, adieu!" And, in mockery, she pretended to wipe one eye with the corner of her apron, while the other—beautiful mirror of her soul!—beamed with affection.

"Marie!" said Adolphe, "I am faithful, although our poverty makes me unhappy."

"Dear Adolphe," answered Marie, "I have no doubt of you; but you doubt *me*."

"I doubt no one—nothing," exclaimed Adolphe, "except my own resolution to accomplish our future welfare."

"You almost frighten me, my Adolphe," returned Marie, in alarm. "In the name of Heaven, what is the matter?"

"I hardly know that myself, Marie. I love."

"And do not *I* love, Adolphe?" demanded Marie, with a blush—not of shame, but of triumphant dignity.

"But I love," continued Adolphe; "and—"

"And what?" eagerly inquired Marie.

"Without hope!"

"Adolphe, I note what you say," replied Marie. "What have you hoped? Nay, not our happiness—our ruin and disgrace! I go back to Pomiere—to a home, where, at least, I can do my duty."

"It shall not be, Marie," said the young man, almost maddened by the suspicions of Marie. "It shall not be. Hear me. I did not mean that."

Marie burst into tears, and, throwing herself into Adolphe's arms, sobbed out,—

"Thank ye, thank ye, Adolphe!"

After a pause, Adolphe said,—

"Come, Marie, let us walk by the side of the river."

"And I love that river," said Marie: "do you know why, Adolphe?"

"Because it is a beautiful mirror, perhaps," returned Adolphe, in banter. "There you can see yourself, and how devotedly I am loving you, while your eyes are downcast away from me."

"No, Adolphe, that is not why I love the river," answered the maiden. "Guess again."

"You think, then, that I shall drown myself, and then you can marry old Tompin the miller. You and your father are right—old Tompin has money."

"You are not jealous of old Tompin the miller, nor of the Marquis, his master; so, tyrant, don't vex me. I have landed better fish on the banks of this river than either of them." And the eyes of the beautiful girl sparkled with the anticipated triumph which would crown the solution of her riddle.

"Really," exclaimed the youth, "you should not do that, Marie: you should leave poaching to men."

"I do leave that trade to men," she replied; "and never since my childhood have I trespassed on this water. Then, with girls

like myself, I have vainly tried to draw the fish within reach of our net, by throwing crumbs on the water. Guess again."

"I cannot divine the reason of your partiality for this stream," said Adolphe, "when a nobler one, with more romantic banks, which you have seen, flows through the next commune, and waters a country much more beautiful than ours. If it afford you no delight as a mirror, nor any amusement in taking the trout, I can imagine no other cause for its claim on your affection."

"Simply because it procured me the affection of another; and —and—and that other," uttered the girl, in a low, hesitating voice, at the same time hiding her reddened features from the youth's anxious gaze. Pausing an instant, she exclaimed, with an affected gaiety,—"Guess again."

"Ah, Marie, is it possible that you allude to your accident," eagerly inquired Adolphe, "when you were plucking some flowers on the bank for your playmates, and you fell into the stream?"

"No, indeed," returned Marie.

Adolphe's countenance, which had for a moment glistened with hope, changed suddenly, and resembled that of a disappointed gamester when the last hope of fortune is irretrievably lost.

Marie saw the effect produced by her answer, and eagerly added,—

"I like the river that would have drowned me, but for one reason—it gained me the affection of my saviour."

"Oh! dearest Marie, speak not of that slight service—"

"At the peril of your life!"

"Repaid a hundredfold by your kindness, your gratitude. But," he continued, in more lively tone, "why did you seek to mystify—to entrap me?"

"It is men themselves that fall into the trap, the snare, and

the net, that women set for them! It was here, on this river bank, that I trapped and snared you, my Adolphe. I had loved you long before; but it was here that, like a most cunning angler, I caught you. I knew that you loved me a long time before you had the courage to commit yourself. You were afraid of the very stones in the road listening to the secret; and I drew you down here, by the side of the river, whose bubbling waters hear no other gossip, that I might, at last, have the confession to myself; and, therefore, I love this river, Adolphe: it is our Confessional!"

"That is as true as heaven!" exclaimed Adolphe. "We must have known that we loved each other long before we dared to say so. But, Marie, have you courage?"

"Courage—I have courage to love thee, my Adolphe, as long as life lasts; and I have courage even to live, that I may enjoy the sorrowful pleasure of watering your grave with my tears. Come, is not that devotion and heroism enough for a poor woman?"

"No, Marie," replied Adolphe. "I, too, shall love you as long as life lasts, because I cannot help myself; and I, too, should, if God wills it, bury all my affections in your grave. But it is hard —very hard—to part on *this* side of it."

"Part! now, and while we are young—Adolphe, it cannot, shall not be so! Ah! I see it written on your brow. We part, then!"

"Only for a time, Marie. Do you not see that in our house there is one too many? For a long time, at every meal, I have felt as if I was one too many, and what should hinder me from taking a willing heart and a strong pair of hands to Paris. If I earn two or three francs a day, I will save one, and when I have got a thousand francs together, I can buy a piece of land and a goat or two; and then we need not cherish the melancholy idea of my father's funeral supplying our marriage feast."

"Paris!" replied Marie. "Paris! wicked Paris! I shudder at the thought of your going there, my Adolphe."

"I can keep myself out of harm's way as well as others," returned the youth; "for you, although absent and unseen, will be my guardian angel."

"Your guardian angel? You are right, Adolphe—I will be your guardian angel."

"There is melancholy and mystery on your brow, Marie—you are hiding your thoughts from me. Speak! why do you repeat my words so solemnly?"

"No matter, Adolphe," answered the maiden. "We have each of us a duty to perform. Go then, to Paris, but always imagine that my eyes are upon you. But you will need much advice before you enter on your pilgrimage."

"As for that," said Adolphe, "I cannot have a better instructor than Gaspard Ferrete, our schoolmaster. He knows every corner of Paris, from Vincennes to the Barrière de l'Etoile, and will give me a recommendation to some of his old friends in the City."

"I never liked Gaspard Ferrete," exclaimed Marie, thoughtfully.

"He is quite a scholar," returned Adolphe, "and knows Latin almost as well as the curé himself."

"He is a misanthrope," said Marie. "He has no hope, no faith; and his company makes every one as miserable as himself."

"*Pauvre diable*," returned Adolphe; "he has reason enough to be dissatisfied. Besides teaching all the children of the village, the curé and the préfet throw all the drudgery of the church and the commune on his shoulders. He has more offices than a Spanish Hidalgo has names, and he executes them all for a beggarly twelve sous a day. How can you expect him to be happy?"

"True, Adolphe," answered Marie; "but because he is dissatisfied with his own lot, he endeavours to make every one else dissatisfied with theirs. Depend on it, Adolphe, that he is, at the

bottom, *un révolutionnaire*, and would not mind bringing honest people into trouble if he had a chance. With his eternal *good time coming*, I am sure that he is always brooding over mischief."

"Well, peace be to him, Marie: I cannot say that he is a particular favourite of mine; for, as you say, he is always reminding us how happy we *might* be were it not for the land-tax and mortgages. He seems to take a delight in irritating our sores; but he may be of some service to me when I am in Paris, and where, but for him, I should be utterly a stranger. And now, Marie, we must meet once more—to-morrow. I will break the matter to Jaques and our father to-night, and in four-and-twenty hours I will be on the road towards Notre Dame."

They stood tongue-tied for an instant; each desired to add much more, but neither could give utterance to their feelings. Adolphe turned his head away to conceal a tear. Marie thought this was intended as the signal for departure, and stepped backwards. She sobbed out an almost inarticulate "adieu," when Adolphe rejoined, "May Heaven bless and preserve you, Marie!" At a few paces they stood, like statues, regarding each other with pity and affection; then, by an almost convulsive effort, they waved their hands, and with heavy hearts they slowly regained their respective homes.

On his return home, Adolphe found his father and brother discussing their frugal evening meal, in company with the above-named Gaspard Ferrete. The schoolmaster had been called in to superintend the settling of an account between Jean Renouard and the agent of his mortgagee.

"Well," observed Jean, with a sigh, "it is paid once more, but how it is to be paid next year is past my comprehension; for the cow must go for seed, corn, and taxes. But we must trust to Providence, I suppose."

"Providence," said the schoolmaster, "troubles itself very

little about those who take no care of themselves. How long have you been paying interest upon your *hypothécaire?*"

"The land," replied Jean, "has been mortgaged these forty years."

"And you have paid the mortgagee his money twice over already. Is it just, master Jean?" asked Gaspard Ferrete.

"He has the law on his side," Jean remarked.

"People who make the law, always have it on their side," said Gaspard.

"You are right," interposed Jaques; "the rich make the law, and the poor are oppressed. If the poor had the making of the law, they would not have to pay twice over."

"The great day, my boy, will shortly arrive," remarked Gaspard, with an ominous wink.

"Ay, so you are always saying," returned Jaques; "but it seems as far off as ever."

"And for that very reason it will come the sooner," said the schoolmaster. "The less it is expected, the more certain it will be. People always sleep soundest just before daybreak—the storm follows a dead calm."

"Well," replied Jaques," there may be a *bon jour* in store for somebody, but not for us, I fear. There were the three great days of July—but what good were they to us?"

"That was a blunder," said Gaspard; "but the next time we must have the *guarantees.*"

"Guarantees for what?" asked Jaques.

"Guarantees," replied the schoolmaster, "against the tyranny of the rich and the oppression of the poor—against usury and the thousand other exactions of capital. When there are real representatives of the people to call the mortgagee to account for the money he has received, they will find very little due to him on the settling day. Would not that be a 'great day' for France, my dear fellow?"

"It would be worth living for," said Jaques.

"And dying for," continued the schoolmaster.

"Hold, master Gaspard!" said Jean, "you should not use such language before a lad like Adolphe."

"And why not, father?" inquired Adolphe. "I don't see why we should go on paying the mortgagee for ever. You say that you have paid back twice as much as you borrowed, already; and master Gaspard is right; it is not just."

"Hold thy tongue, Adolphe," commanded the father. "You do not understand these matters."

"I understand thus much, nevertheless," replied Adolphe; "that after satisfying the government, and the mortgagee, and the overseers of the commune, our bit of land does not afford a living for three. One-third of our produce goes to pay the land-debt and the taxes, and the other two-thirds are barely sufficient to support two of us. Somebody, therefore, must go without—either Jaques, or I, or the mortgagee—for *you*, father, must be fed on your own land. Well, which should it be—Jaques or I, who toil from morning till night, and without whom not an ear of corn would be grown, or the mortgagee, whose just claims have all been satisfied long ago?"

"Adolphe, boy," answered the father, "such dreams are senseless. It is not left to our option whether we will pay the mortgagee or not; if we do not pay him, he can sell the land and pay himself."

"True, father, true," said Adolphe; "but my dreams may be realized in one way, if not in another. You have more incumbrances than you can bear, and if I cannot rid you of the mortgagee, I can, at least, rid you of myself."

"What is the boy talking about?" exclaimed Jean, with surprise.

"Why, father, should I not do as other and better lads have done before me?" asked Adolphe. "You and Jaques would

miss my knife from the loaf much more than you would my hand from the plough. Now Pierre Tantot, and Jules Troyers, and others, have gone to Paris, and they send word that there is plenty of hard work there to be had at two or three francs a day, and that there are capital eating-houses where you can live like a prince for one. Father, I will go to Paris to-morrow. I can make mortar and carry bricks as well as Pierre Tantot and Jules Troyers; and you and Jaques may be able to pay the mortgagee without stinting your stomachs."

"Bravo! a good boy!" exclaimed Gaspard Ferrete. "And I, Adolphe, will give you, as I have promised, a line to some old friend of mine in the City, not far from Notre Dame. Paris is the only place in the world for a lad of mettle. Who knows what may turn up?—eh!"

Old Jean at first refused to listen to Adolphe's proposal, but was ultimately overcome by the obstinacy of the youth, backed by the persuasions of the schoolmaster. A few Napoleons, which had been hoarded in his mother's time, were now brought into request; and the next day Adolphe committed himself and his little fortunes to the wide world, which was open before him.

CHAPTER III.

It was on the evening of a fine summer's day when Paris burst upon the wondering eyes of Adolphe, from the triumphal arch near the Barrière de l'Etoile. On attaining the summit of the hill, he paused to contemplate the checkered mass of grove and garden, of stately mansions and palaces, of domes, turrets, and columns, that now first appeared to his eager gaze; and, struck with admiration at the beauty of this novel sight, he felt proud in being a Frenchman, and prouder still at the thought of becoming, in some way, identified with the craft and genius which the great city embodied.

Although London is, unquestionably, the monster city of Europe, it is an object of far less curiosity with a stranger from the rural districts, than Paris is to the same class in France. The communication between the metropolis of England and the provinces is so constant and rapid, that to have seen London is considered a very ordinary sort of adventure, even for a Welshman or a Scotchman; while in France, to have seen Paris is, with a countryman from even a contiguous department, to have seen something worth living to see. In no other respect, indeed, does the national egotism of France so fully display itself, as in relation to Paris. A Frenchman thinks it a great thing to have been born in the metropolis, and regards it collectively as a grand national monument to the genius of his country, in which he has an equal property with the greatest of his fellow-citizens, or with a king or an emperor himself.

"And this is Paris," mentally exclaimed Adolphe, "and that is

the Seine, and there is Notre Dame, and there must be the Champs Elysées, stretching down to the gardens of the Tuileries. *Mon Dieu!* I am fortunate; but what fête can it be that all these people are celebrating!" Indeed, it seemed to Adolphe that all Paris must have turned out to commemorate some great event; for all around him appeared bent on amusement, and every one looked so joyous and happy, saluting and welcoming, and flattering each other in the throng, as if the whole multitude were engrossed by one common theme of congratulation. Equipages, too, in endless variety, rolled along in every direction, filling up a superb *tableau* of animation without confusion, and of gaiety without boisterousness. Your Frenchman is too wise to exhaust his enjoyment by efforts to increase his exhilaration: the character of it is rather that of cheerfulness than of mirth; he basks rather than revels in his pleasures. "What would Marie say to a sight like this?" said Adolphe to himself, and for a moment his imagination carried him back from the dazzling scene before him, to the green of his native village, and its Sabbath evening dances.

By the aid of instructions supplied to him by Gaspard Ferrete, Adolphe found his way to the quays on the north bank of the river, and, passing the Tuileries, crossed over into the City, by the Pont au Change. Gaspard had, moreover, furnished him with an introduction to one André Jacquot, a *serrurier*, or locksmith, living in the Rue des Chiens, within the purlieus of the Palais de Justice; and it now became necessary for him to inquire his way through the labyrinth of narrow and lofty streets in which he was becoming involved. A little urchin, without shoes or stockings, and, indeed, without any other covering than a pair of ragged trousers and a sleeveless shirt, promptly offered to conduct him to André Jacquot's abode for a sou.

"Hum!" muttered Adolphe; "this André Jacquot, being a locksmith, must be well to do in the world, for I have heard

that it is a good trade; but, really, I don't much admire his taste in the selection of a residence. Faugh! what a stench there is about the place! My appetite would be soon brought within the compass of my purse, were I to be cooped up in such a filthy quarter as this."

The scene had indeed changed since he had entered the old island called the City. Nothing that is recorded of St. Giles', or still exists in the eastern districts of London, can convey an adequate idea of the wretched locality which is frowned upon by Notre Dame on one side, and the Palais de Justice on the other. If the houses in Rosemary-lane were piled up to twice their present height, the pavement removed, and the sewers choked up, you would have a striking resemblance to it; but still you would have nothing comparable to the abominations of the courts and alleys in its rear. It was into one of these courts that Adolphe was conducted by his guide, who, pointing out the house where André Jacquot plied his trade, informed him that he would find the locksmith in the garret No. 9.

Adolphe shuddered, as he laid his hand on the clammy banister to assist him in ascending; it felt as if it had been besmeared by slimy reptiles; and he shrank from the contamination with disgust. The staircase, too, was plastered with a coat of mud, so greasy and tenacious, that he had some difficulty in keeping on his feet. Onward, however, he toiled up successive flights, until he arrived at a corridor of mansards, or attics, literally formed in the roof of the house, the tiles shelving down on each side to the floor, and allowing as much daylight to enter as could be refracted through windows composed partly of the coarsest glass and partly of greased paper.

Adolphe knocked at the door of No. 9, and, receiving the "entrez," walked in, and presented his letter. While the locksmith was perusing it, Adolphe had time to take a hasty glance round the apartment. There was neither fire-place nor chimney in it;

but in an old kettle—such as our travelling tinkers carry about—there was some live charcoal, which, if Adolphe's sense of smelling had not been already disciplined by still more unsavoury odours, would have thrown him into a syncope. Under the window was the locksmith's bench; but there was no table, nor, indeed, furniture of any kind except two stools; and, in the corner of the room furthest from the door, a miserable straw bed, only partially covered by a coarse and tattered horse-rug. The floor, composed of pentagonal bricks, struck a chill through Adolphe's frame, for it was quite as filthy as the staircase; and here and there the rain, which had descended through fractures in the tiled roof, stood upon it in little puddles. Adolphe could not have conceived that a human being could endure existence in so desolate and wretched an abode.

"I am happy to make your acquaintance, master Adolphe," said the locksmith, folding up the letter; "especially as you are a pupil of my old friend, Gaspard Ferrete."

"I am a thousand times obliged to you," returned Adolphe; "for I should be lost in this great city, unless I found some one kind enough to take me by the hand."

"You will do well enough, when you have been here a few days," continued Monsieur Jacquot; "though things must appear to you very strange at first. I remember, when I first came to Paris as a greenhorn, I was as near running home again as a Switzer to the tune of *Rans-des-vaches*. But use reconciles you to many things; and if we workmen have many little miseries in Paris, we have some great enjoyments. We have *société*, to say nothing of the great day, which we look forward to with as much confidence as the Jews do to a new Jerusalem."

"You then think the great day will shortly arrive, as well as Gaspard Ferrete?" questioned Adolphe.

"Who is to hinder it?" returned Monsieur Jacquot. "Tyranny has had many lucky escapes, but its luck cannot last for ever.

The slightest accident might upset it to-morrow. Yes, my young friend, the great day must come; and it will come upon king, aristocracy, and *bourgeoisie* alike—as a thief comes in the night. *We*, on the contrary, shall be ready for it. But *sacré!* the first thing to be thought about, is how to bestow you for the night. Let us go and see whether you can be accommodated by 'our mother,' as the landlady of the house of call is termed; for I perceive you are not a *companion*." *

* Under the old mercantile system of monopolies, corporations, guilds, &c., which prevailed throughout Europe for several centuries, and the influence of which is not even yet extinct in Germany and France, companionship was a kind of noviciate which the members of several crafts were compelled to go through after the expiration of their apprenticeship, before they could commence business on their own account. No guild would permit an artisan to trade within the bounds of its jurisdiction, unless he could produce a certificate of companionship; that is, of having served a given period in the capacity of a journeyman.

It is recorded, moreover, that the probationary term of companionship was not allowed to be passed in any stationary situation, but that the noviciates were compelled to perform a sort of pilgrimage, working from town to town, until they had performed a sort of industrial "grand tour" of their country. It was natural that if a companion should fail to find work, or should fall sick on his travels, or should from any other cause stand in need of assistance, the trades should afford it to him; and in every town they appear to have had a particular rendezvous to which the itinerant novice resorted, with the certainty of obtaining either temporary employment, or the means of prosecuting his journey.

But, in the course of time, the institution seems to have abandoned its original principle; namely, that of improving the industrial education of the young craftsman by enjoining from him the duty, and affording him the opportunities, of travel before he settled down in life; and every journeyman "on the tramp," as it is called, in England, acquired a permanent claim upon the funds of the companionship provided he had been regularly admitted into the order. In short, it degenerated into a great Benefit Society, or rather into a great ramification of Benefit Societies, which were connected with these parent societies, the most ancient of which was the "Society of the Sons of Solomon;" Solomon himself, according to their tradition, having been the original founder of their Order.

The affectation of secret symbols and mystic ceremonies, by these class institutions or clubs, is in our day regarded as simply a piece of harmless tom-foolery; but in former times, when the church regarded all secret societies as dangerous competitors with her own craft, companionship did not escape the persecution of Rome. In France, especially, they were denounced about the middle of the seventeenth century, and the Fraternities were compelled, like the Lollards, the

So saying, the locksmith put on his blouse and paper cap, and led the way down stairs.

For an unsophisticated and yet ardent youth, like Adolphe, André Jacquot was the most dangerous guide, in such a place as Paris, that Gaspard Ferrete could have selected. André had received a decent education, and, after having served his apprenticeship to a locksmith, had set up, with every prospect of success, for himself. His skill and ingenuity as a mechanist were widely known; and he might have commanded an excellent business, had he only paid ordinary attention to his own interests and to the feelings of others. But André had early become a political enthusiast, and not only neglected his calling, but rendered himself

Albigenses, the old Covenanters of Scotland, and the Early Christians of Italy, to hold their réunions in the defiles of the mountain or the recesses of the forest. This persecution first suggested to the companions the necessity of pass-words, in order to protect themselves from espionage and treachery; and previous to this time, their ceremonies, notwithstanding the air of mystery in which they were studiously enveloped, were nothing more than extracts from the Rubric of the Catholic Church.

There are several trades in England—such as the curriers for instance—which still preserve companionship amongst them: an infallible mark of their continental origin, and for a trade in which the numbers are limited, it is certainly a very useful institution. It should be observed, at the same time, that the primitive ordeal of an industrial tour is not necessary here to admission into companionship, as it still is in some of the trades of Germany, France, and the Low Countries. The following description is a somewhat sentimental, but nevertheless a pleasing, picture of these mutual benefit societies:—

"To be admitted as a companion, the candidate must first give unequivocal proofs of his skill in his trade; and immediately after his admission, he must undertake to perform the tour of France.

"On arriving in a town, the traveller resorts to an auberge where the companions in the neighbourhood hold their lodge; that is at *'their mother's,'* for so they figuratively style their hostess. If the pilgrim is without money, without credit, and cannot obtain employment in the town, he finds in the house of 'our mother' not only bed and board, but friends; a family of which he is himself a member; and everything which can nourish the body and console the mind. His brethren, who come to his succour, endeavour to eclipse each other in prodigality of kindnesses which they bestow upon him through the agency of their 'mother;' and truly it is a touching and admirable idea, that of confiding to a woman the

obnoxious to the very best class of his customers, the *bourgeoisie*. He consequently failed in trade, and was the more soured by his misfortune because he had no one to blame for it but himself, and conceived an implacable hatred for the order from which he had fallen. During the three days of July he was in an ecstasy of fanatical exultation; but the Revolution, in the end, had done nothing towards realizing his aspirations, and he became one of the most determined conspirators against the system which he had fought and bled at the barricades to establish. In fact, he saw that the power, which that revolution had taken from the *noblesse*, by the abolition of the hereditary legislature, had only been transferred to the *bourgeoisie*, whom he detested with all the hate of

office of dispensing to all the tenderness and the offerings of friendship. If the travelling workman cannot procure an engagement, or if urgent affairs demand his presence elsewhere, and he is utterly without resources of his own, the companionship assists him from town to town until he either obtains work or reaches the place of his destination. Everywhere he finds brothers who help him, and a 'mother' who cherishes him; everywhere he finds a shelter from misery, and the temptations which attend it."

In France, this system was broken up by the first revolution, and its only remaining feature is a common "house of call" for the workmen at certain trades. Labourers and others stand in front of the Hôtel de Ville (town or guild-hall) every morning and evening: the open square is their only office, and Providence their only "mother." The unemployed members of other trades remain at their respective "houses of call," without expense, waiting their turn to work.

Journeymen travelling to the Hanse Towns are still compelled by law to reside at "the mother's" until they obtain employment, and they are strictly watched by the police. The term "mother" has there become a jest; the poor traveller is fleeced or robbed by the guests, or by the extortion of the hostess or host, and also distracted by the drunken orgies of the inmates, and the midnight visits of the police under pretext of "examining passports." These annoyances are particularly noticed in the once "FREE city" of Frankfort. Yet, before a foreign artisan can cross the frontier of Germany, he is compelled to satisfy the passport clerks as to his place of destination, the intended term of his residence, &c., &c., &c.; and to produce a sufficient amount of money to guarantee that he can pay his expenses out of their hospitable country in case he should not find employment during his sojourn! This vexatious and contemptible policy is pursued by a nation whose artisans are to be found in herds amongst, and are hospitably treated by, their brethren of Western and Southern Europe.

an outcast. It is not wonderful, therefore, that, as soon as the doctrines of Socialism and Communism began to make way among the masses, he should lend all his energies to their agitation, and that he became a St. Simonian to the most extreme latitude of that dangerous and unnatural creed.

André was now about five-and-thirty years of age. He had been married, but his wife had died without children; and as the abolition of the institution of family is the great avowed end of St. Simonianism, he repudiated the idea of marrying again *upon principle*. With respect to his religious belief, André would have had some difficulty in explaining it himself; for, while he rejected the religion of his fathers, he had adopted no other in its place. He was not decided even on the immortality of the soul, dismissing it as a mystery which man was never intended to fathom, and ridiculing the idea of preparing for a future life, of the existence and conditions of which God had not thought proper to inform us in this.

André, as I have said, had few superiors in his trade throughout Paris; and as the wages of a locksmith are good, there was no absolute necessity for his living in the miserable condition we have described. But André had no idea of *home;* such as it was, it was only his workshop and his dormitory; his element was society—in the chair of a club, or in the van of a procession. Moreover, he preferred a precarious dependence upon the casual jobs brought to him, to regular employment in the service of a master. He could not endure the thought of a capitalist living on the profits of his industry and skill; and he would rather go without his dinner, than earn it with the mortification of adding something to the gains of a tyrant employer.

Between André and the schoolmaster of Autun there was a strong bond of sympathy, for they had both irrecoverably lost their position, and both hated the class from which they were hopelessly excluded by their own want of steadiness or integrity.

Gaspard Ferrete, it was rumoured, had held some subordinate government situation under the Restoration, but had received his dismissal from the same hands which had conferred upon him the appointment. After the Revolution of July, he had applied, as a political martyr, for reinstatement; but, for some reason or another, his application was rejected. The secret history of his fall was, in fact, this—and it has been by no means an uncommon episode in the political conspiracies of France—that Gaspard was discovered to be connected with a republican, or quasi-republican club, which meditated the overthrow of Charles the Tenth several years before it was finally effected; and, to mitigate the resentment of the government, and save his place, he betrayed several men of mark, whose lives might have been compromised by his treachery, had not the government feared to drive them into actual resistance by attacking them. After the flight of Charles the Tenth, Gaspard's correspondence fell into the hands of these very men, who were now at the head of affairs; and the only answer he received from M. L——, was a copy of his infamous denunciations to the police of the old Bourbons eight or nine years before. With the world, however—and even with his friend, André Jacquot—he passed for an ill-used man, who had run the risk of his life in the battle, but was ungratefully forgotten in the division of the spoil.

Passing out of the City, over the same bridge by which Adolphe had entered it, the locksmith led him through the heart of northern Paris to the Port St. Denis. Adolphe breathed more freely after emerging from the fœtid atmosphere of the street; and the evening breeze, that swept along the quay, seemed more refreshing and purifying than even those which played on the banks of that delightful stream, which was the only confidant of his love for his charming Marie.

"By the power of stench, Monsieur Jacquot," he said, "with all my respect for the friend of my old schoolmaster, I should

scarcely like to be your next door neighbour, if you have no better domicile than where I found you at work. I would rather bivouac under the portico of yonder church, than pass a night in your dormitory."

"Take care," replied André. "If they were to find such a rustic as you snoring on the church steps, they would soon find you a worse lodging than my sky-parlour. The government is a most paternal one in our beautiful Paris, and has a place for every one who cannot find one to his liking for himself. And it is right."

"I do not comprehend you," returned Adolphe.

"Why, are there not in the City," retorted the locksmith, "asylums for the most destitute—not only corners where you may roll yourself up like a hedgehog, and sleep for twelve hours for a couple of sous, but dilapidated houses, where you may have a lodging for nothing if you have only courage enough to lodge with the proprietors from time immemorial—the rats! And are there not the stone quarries of Mont Rouge and of Charenton, the lime-kilns of Clichy, and twenty other places, beside the guard-houses and the Refuge for the Destitute, where you may bivouac better than under the portico of a church, which would be sacrilege, or under the porch of some arrogant *bourgeois*, which would be worse? Our police are compassionate. If a man lays himself down in the street, because he has nowhere to go, they take him up for a vagrant, and put a stop to his propensity for rambling by bundling him neck and heels into a *stone jug*."

"A stone jug?" said Adolphe; "again, I do not understand you."

"A stone *cell*—in a prison," said the locksmith. "You can understand that?"

"And you say that this is right?" quoth the youth.

"Right!" retorted the locksmith. "Assuredly it is right, while the present relations between capital and labour exist; if all who had not comfortable berths to resort to, were allowed to sleep in

the streets, Paris, at night, would be a very pretty dormitory in the open air! By Vulcan's forge! what a masquerade it would be. But, ah! there would be some danger in awakening the sleepers. It is not safe to permit half a million of hungry men to sleep on the same bed, though it may fairly be their birthright, the bosom of their mother earth!"

"And is there so much misery among the working classes of Paris?" asked Adolphe, in surprise. "I always thought that they were a merry, rollicking people, and somewhat more given to dissipation—excuse me—than we of the provinces."

"Yes," replied master Jaquot; "they will laugh when they can; and if they are improvident, the fault is not theirs. It is useless for them to do otherwise; for they have no more control over their own fate than the oxen, who are worked, fattened, or slaughtered by their superiors, just as the grazier is influenced by the price of meat in the market."

"Surely," replied Adolphe, "a good workman is always worth his pittance."

"Yes, while the work lasts," answered the locksmith. "But if he is compelled by a grasping capitalist to work with tools which will produce as much in a week as there is a demand for in a month, he must work like a negro for one quarter of the year, and starve the other three. Our capitalists supersede men by machinery, or rather they convert men into a mere subsidiary part of the machinery. One pair of hands, with machinery, will do as much work as formerly ten pairs of hands did without it: the hands alone belong to the workman, and the machinery to the master. See the distribution of profits: the master takes nine parts for the use of his machinery, and leaves one to the workman for the labour of his hands. Does the workman say it is unjust? The master only wants one pair of hands where formerly he required ten, and there are, therefore, ten competitors for one man's work, who are all bidding below each other for the same employment. Must

we not do away with this suicidal competition of labour, by emancipating ourselves from the tyranny of capital?"

"But how?" asked Adolphe. "Would you have a law to prevent the use of machinery?"

"No," replied the locksmith; "that would be unnecessary if we had a law to prevent the abuse of human beings; for machinery, Heaven be praised, can never be endowed with intelligence; and, powerful as it is, even with the hands of a child to direct it, nothing can be executed absolutely of itself. Without human beings to attend it, like slaves, it can do nothing. And *why* should human beings attend to it like slaves—like the slaves who were chained to the oar in the galleys of their conquerors and oppressors of old? *Voici* cannot be used before a demonstration: the lower classes (*only*) say *Voilà!* If the workmen only toiled in the workshop six hours a day instead of twelve, would there not be employment for twice as many of them?"

"Yes," said Adolphe, "I have been taught enough by my schoolmaster to see that as plainly as that twice one are two."

"And if the workmen, in addition," pursued the locksmith, "were to receive the profits now engrossed by the capitalist, would not their common labour create a general fund sufficient for the maintenance of all?"

"Undoubtedly; but what will become of the capitalist?" returned Adolphe.

"He may lend us his capital and machinery," replied the locksmith, "and we will pay him a fair price for the use of it, which is more than he has ever paid us for the use of our hands."

"But if he refuses?"

"Why, then, *mon garçon*, he will be a fool; for will not his machinery be useless to him without *us*? And as for his capital, let him invest it in stock or in houses, or anything he likes."

"But the question is, not how the capitalist is to do without

the workman, but how the workman is to do without machinery, workshops, and the like, which capital alone can supply?"

"Well said!" exclaimed the locksmith. "Your schoolmaster has taught you more logic than I should have supposed; and I wonder that he did not initiate you further into the principles of our organization, which is as simple as the mechanism of a lock. Tell me who fights for the country?"

"The soldier."

"And who supplies him with the implements of his trade—his musket and sword; with his machinery—his trains of artillery; with his *ateliers* in the field and in quarters, his tents, and his barracks?"

"The State," answered Adolphe.

"And who supplies the country with clothing and food, and houses and furniture, and everything that it is worth the while of the country to maintain soldiers to protect?"

"The working classes, undoubtedly," answered Adolphe.

"And why, then," asked the locksmith, triumphantly, "should not the State think proper to furnish the workman with the implements of his trade, with his machinery, and his *ateliers*, as well as the soldier?"

"That is true," observed Adolphe, seriously; "but, alas!"

"Alas for what, young friend?"

"The State will never do this for the people!"

"The State never *has* done this for the people, you mean."

"And it would be idle to hope that it ever will," added Adolphe.

"You are mistaken; not that I expect much myself from our citizen king and his republican pledges: but you are mistaken, nevertheless, for the great day will come."

"Stop, Master Jacquot," said Adolphe, somewhat bothered by the repetition of a piece of club slang, which he did not comprehend. "I have often heard Gaspard Ferrete talk as wisely and

mysteriously about this *great day* as you do yourself, and I should be glad if you would condescend to explain to me what it means."

"Then listen," continued André Jacquot, in a subdued, but more serious tone. "You say the State will never do what we have been talking about for the people. I say the State will do this for the people, *when the people is the State;* and will not that be a *great day,* my friend, when the people of our beautiful country shall say, in a voice which will make all the thrones in Europe tremble, '*We are the State.*'"

Adolphe was staggered for a moment by this unmistakable avowal of the locksmith's principles; for he was not ignorant that Paris had been a hotbed of conspiracies, and some for the wildest objects imaginable, against the existing dynasty, almost from its first enthronement. He had been told, moreover, more, perhaps, than was true, of the vigilant espionage of the government for their detection, and of the seductions and treacheries which were practised upon the unwary with such prodigality of corruption, that, as in the earlier days of the empire, one half of Paris was engaged in worming out the secret disaffection of the other. "My companion," he said to himself, "is either too good or too bad a subject of the citizen king, to be a very safe acquaintance for a raw youth like myself. He is, evidently, engaged in some very dangerous, or very dirty work, with which I will have nothing to do. I have come to Paris to save a thousand francs for Marie and myself; I came here 'to live by working,' and NOT, gentlemen of Paris, to die fighting."

André Jacquot, too, was not insensible to the impression which he had produced upon Adolphe; and he did not resume the conversation until after the view of the Boulevard, which they crossed to pass out through Port St. Denis, had given a new turn to his young companion's reflections.

"There is not such a sight in the world as the Boulevards of

Paris," said the locksmith, responding to Adolphe's enthusiastic admiration of the scene; "and yet I do not blame Gaspard Ferrete for preferring the repose of a village to all the gaiety of Paris."

"By my faith, friend, I think that neither of you ought to envy the other; for, if I had no alternative but to be either André Jacquot, the skilful *mechanician* in the rue aux Chiens, or Gaspard Ferrete, the learned schoolmaster, of Autun, I should not know which to decline as the worse lot of the two."

"Well, it matters nothing how it fares with us poor pig-headed Parisians," said André, without exhibiting the slightest offence at Adolphe's thoughtless remarks upon his miserable condition; "but is it not a shame that a man of talent and utility like Gaspard Ferrete should be compensated for his services worse than the poorest waiter who serves at a three-halfpenny soup shop in the Faubourg St. Antoine?"

"The good people of Autun," replied Adolphe, "pay him, I assure you, quite as much as they can afford."

"And why is it," replied André, "that they cannot afford more? Because the State, instead of taxing the mortgagee of the land, taxes the proprietor."

"By all the Saints! that is true," exclaimed Adolphe. "Though I never thought of it before. The mortgagee has more profit from the land than the proprietors, and why, therefore, does he not bear his part of its burdens?"

"Because the State is aristocratically selfish," replied the locksmith, "from its head to its meanest organs; from the crown (juggled, manœuvred, by a pitiful legerdemain trick on the head of the ex-Lieutenant-General) to the most contemptible jackal of the immense army of spies, which the usurpation of sovereignty, and breach of faith with the Republicans, has rendered necessary to keep him tottering in that gilt arm-chair he calls his throne."

"Then I should like the State better, if the aristocracy had less to do with it," said Adolphe.

"And the shopocracy also," added André; "but let us walk quicker," concluded the locksmith. "We will just call at the house of 'our mother,' who, for my sake, will treat you as if you were one of our brotherhood of locksmiths—and that is, as if you were one of her own children. We will take a bottle and a plate of anything she may have, and then I will introduce you to some amusing society hard by."

"I have another letter to deliver," said Adolphe.

"To Beauvois, or, as we call him, Bonhomme," interrupted André. "You see I know the superscription, from our friend Gaspard, and I am also acquainted with its import. But the old man is pining in prison, I believe, and I have lost sight of his son; but if the latter be still in Paris, I can find him. You must first have refreshment and rest."



ADOLPHE'S INTRODUCTION TO WIDOW CREMY IN HER CABARET.

CHAPTER IV.

> And liquor likewise, will I give to thee,
> And friendship shall combine, and brotherhood.
>
> SHAKSPERE.

In the heart of the dense area which constitutes the Faubourg St. Denis, stood the cabaret of the Widow Cremy, who had for several years been termed Mother of the Brotherhood of Locksmiths. The principal apartment of the house, which you entered from the street, was a large oblong room furnished with a double row of stout tables, which bore, however, upon the face of them, marks of long and hard service; and upon which thirty or forty *ouvriers* (workmen) were now discussing each his separate repast, the collective feast presenting as great a variety of dishes as the guests did of classes. At the further end of the room the widow sat enthroned within an enclosed and somewhat elevated space, from whence she could see at a single glance all that was going on, her eye radiating, as it were, over her company, like that of an auctioneer while a lot is under the hammer.

André Jacquot, with Adolphe at his heels, made direct for the hostess, who, on learning his application, surrendered her presidential seat to a pretty little brunette, her niece, and conducted the new comers into a further room, which was not profaned by ordinary use, being in fact, as might have been gathered from the emblematic devices by which its walls were adorned, the *sanctorum* of the ancient fraternity of locksmiths, when that body was in full prosperity.

"What is it you request, my son," asked the widow, addressing

her speech to the locksmith, but her eyes to Adolphe, whom she regarded with a look of curiosity and interest.

"This youth," replied Jacquot, "is not one of our craft, but I wish you to treat him as a son, notwithstanding. He is a stranger to Paris; and though he must reconcile himself to it and its ways before he has done with it, a comfortable night's lodging to sleep off the fatigue of his journey is an indulgence which I am not disciplinarian enough to refuse him."

"You are quite right, Master Jacquot"—for now that she knew Adolphe not to be one of the brotherhood of which she was termed the "Mother," she no longer addressed the locksmith symbolically as her son—"you are right, Master Jacquot; for every one who has originally come up from the provinces declares that his first night in Paris gave him the horrors more than all the rest put together."

"*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*—the first plunge is the worst," returned the locksmith. "Every man learns to make little of inconveniences, as well as luxuries, when he becomes familiar with them; and I don't know whether I do not attach even less importance to the discomforts of my miserable garret in Rue des Chiens, than I used to do to the comforts of my well-furnished house formerly. The mind requires its satisfaction as well as the body; and perhaps I am now more happy because I am more independent."

"Ah! Master Jacquot," replied the widow, with a sigh, which told that she felt for this fallen man—"you deceive yourself. With your talents, and your consciousness of them, you cannot think that you are in your proper position."

"So much the worse," returned the locksmith, "for a false civilization, of which it is better, morally speaking, to be the victim than an accomplice. But, mother, you can hardly agree with any one of your sons on these matters, and you are wise in your generation," he continued, with a laugh, as if he was

desirous of giving the conversation an air of mere *badinage;* "for if the whole order of brotherhood, from the *Children of Solomon* down to the respectable society of *Chiffoniers*, should merge into the grand *organization of labour*, the locksmiths will have to make a holocaust of these gewgaws (pointing to the emblems of a brotherhood with which the walls were hung) to the new principle of association; we shall acknowledge no brotherhood except the universal brotherhood of mankind; we shall disown all mothers, except our country; and *you* will be like Rachel weeping for her children—because they were not! But never mind: let us have a sealed bottle, and something to eat; for I wish to take my young friend for an hour to the *Rue des Vingt-un.*"

"So soon, Master Jacquot," said the hostess. "My faith! I thought that you intended to allow him the indulgence of a night's rest, to sleep off the fatigue of his journey, before you began to initiate him in the mysteries of Paris and its ways. But I go. I will send Annette back with what you want."

The pretty brunette, already spoken of as the widow's niece, expeditiously entered with a bottle of wine, two small plates of meat, a few radishes, and some bread; and, as she was arranging the viands on a small table at which the locksmith and Adolphe were sitting *vis-à-vis*, she managed to catch the eye of the latter, while behind the former, and signalized so expressively to Adolphe by the motion of her eyes and a slight frown that he should be on his guard with his companion, that he resolved to terminate their short-lived acquaintance as quickly as possible.

"There can be no immediate danger," he reflected; "for the people in this house appear to be anything but confederates with him; and after this evening I will avoid him."

The locksmith interrupted his reverie.

"Our 'mother,'" he said, "is one of the best women living; and if I bantered her by taxing her with egotism in dissuading

us, as she always does, from our projects for a better association of the working classes than already exists, it was only the repetition of an old joke between us."

"Master Jacquot," returned Adolphe, "I am, as you have truly said, a stranger to Paris and its ways—and to many of its ways, perhaps, it will be better if I continue to be so. I want to know nothing of associations or organizations, which are above the capacity of a poor peasant youth like myself, who will be quite satisfied if he can only obtain plenty of hard work, and reasonable wages for it."

"But what if you find," asked the locksmith, "that this is refused you?"

"It is not refused to others," replied Adolphe; "and as I am willing and able to work, like others, I don't see why it should be refused to me."

"On the contrary," returned his companion: "they will give you the preference."

"Come, my friend," retorted the youth, "this is rather too much. I may pass in a crowd, for the matter of my face; but there is nothing in it, that people should select me for hugging bricks and mixing mortar in preference to stouter or more practised fellows than myself."

"I must explain this to you," said the locksmith. "A master, who wants a workman for a job, which is fairly worth three francs, goes to the Place de Grève, where he finds three workmen who have not yet been hired. He speaks to the first one, and asks him what sum he will do the job for. The man answers three francs—its fair value; because he has a wife and three children, and cannot afford to do it for less. The master then turns to the second, and puts the same question. This man offers to do the job for two francs, because he has no children, though he has a wife. The master lastly goes to the third, who having (like yourself) neither wife nor children, consents to do

the job for one franc and a half. Thus a master gets a day's work done for half a day's wages, and you, the single man, will have the preference; but although you will get the work, you will not get the fair wages for it you seem to expect."

"But," said Adolphe, "both the single man, and the married man without children, were wrong in consenting to do the work for less than it was fairly worth. Had they refused to take less, the master would have been compelled to give *one* of them the full value of the work, at any rate."

"Exactly so," observed the locksmith. "And if the working men were *unanimous* in refusing to do a fair day's work for less than a fair day's wages, they would all of them in the end obtain full wages instead of half wages. Is not that quite evident?"

"Yes," replied Adolphe, "if they would all unanimously agree and honestly stick to that, every one of them, in the long run, would be benefited considerably by it."

"But how are they to agree to it," again asked the locksmith, "unless they come to a clear understanding—unless they *associate* together, and pledge themselves to each other—each to all the rest—that, one and all, they will abstain from injuring their fellow-workmen and themselves by working for less wages than the work is justly worth?"

"He would be doing a great service to his fellow-workmen, who could bring about such an understanding amongst them," returned Adolphe; "but I should fear that it would be difficult—if not almost impossible."

"Without *association*, it would be *quite* impossible," added the locksmith; "but *with* association, everything is possible. And do you not think that the working classes have a right to associate for such purposes? To associate for the purpose of simply coming to an understanding how they are to avoid a cutting of each other's throats, as they are now doing daily and hourly, by a suicidal competition for employment at any rate of wages to

which the conscience of a master will allow him to bate down the price of hard labour?"

"Undoubtedly, it is their right," answered Adolphe. "Masters have the right to get the most work done that they can for their money,—no one denies it to them;—and none can, therefore, deny the right of the workmen to get the most money they can for their labour?"

"That is stating the question in such a manner, that no hard-hearted capitalist in the world could answer it," observed the locksmith; "and, therefore, you see nothing wrong in an association of the working classes for the protection of the rights of labour—the only inheritance to which they were born, and the only property which, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, they are ever destined to possess?"

"I not only see nothing wrong in it," replied the young man; "but I repeat that any one who brings about such an association ——"

"That is, *organizes* it?" interrupted the jesuitical locksmith.

"Yes," continued Adolphe, "any one who could organize such an association would deserve well of his countrymen."

"See, then, my young friend," said the other; "such is the organization and association which is so unpopular with our excellent hostess—to say nothing of other old women, who by no means put the same interest in the welfare of the poor workmen as she does. Our *companionship*, which is, in fact, but a system of separate association, perhaps satisfied all the necessities of bygone times, and, as far as it goes, is an admirable institution, even now. But why has it become so feeble that it can hardly support itself? Labour, in every department of industry, has become so depreciated, by the suicidal competition for employment, of which we have been speaking, that it cannot, in any one of them, provide for the support of its own members who may be reduced to want by sickness, or slackness of trade; and

thus the discharge of the grand duty of companionship is becoming every day more difficult. If the wages of the locksmith, for instance, were as good as they were formerly, the brotherhood of locksmiths would flourish as it did formerly; and am I not, with all deference to our admirable 'mother,' advocating the cause of the brotherhood, when I am advocating a more comprehensive organization and association, by which the legitimate fruits of their labour may be secured to them, and thus supply them with the means of accomplishing the great ends of the institution—the relief of their less fortunate brethren in the hour of need? Women, however, cannot be expected to comprehend such matters as these."

"Truly not," said Adolphe. "And is her pretty niece as much prejudiced against your new plans of association as her aunt?"

Adolphe, with some self-satisfaction at his own adroitness, put this as a fishing question, to ascertain whether Annette might not have some other reason for so significantly warning him to have a distrust of his companion. André Jacquot stared at Adolphe across the table for the space of two or three seconds, as if the question was so entirely foreign to the subject upon which his thoughts had been engaged, that he was momentarily at a loss for the meaning or the motive of it. Then, as if he had recovered himself from a fit of abstraction, he said—

"Eh? Yes—you were speaking of pretty Annette? If you come often here, you must take care that she does not involve you in some net or another of mystification. Her whole delight is in leading the imagination of some unsuspecting good fellow a dance, just for the pleasure of seeing people hoax themselves. But there is no mischief in her, for she never plays with people's feelings; and she is such a bewitching little creature, that she might, if she were heartless enough, do more harm in that way than she does in the other."

"Oh, oh!" thought Adolphe to himself; "this, then, was the

game you were playing, Miss Annette; but you shall find that two can play it as well as one."

Hardly had the thought crossed him, when Annette again entered the room to remove the plates, and turning her back upon the locksmith, as before, she stared Adolphe hard in the face as she reached over the table, and breathed upon him a whisper, so gentle that it seemed to sigh as it passed by his ear, and then die away—"Don't go." And then, as if to prevent it reverberating to the locksmith, in the same breath added, sharply—"I wish you would make use of your hands instead of your eyes, sir, and pass me your knife and fork."

"A thousand pardons, *ma chère*," retorted Adolphe. "That you should wait upon such a rustic as me, I felt to be such an indignity to your beauty, that I could not make myself an accomplice to it, by assisting you to go through it."

"Well, Master Jacquot," she said, gaily, turning to the locksmith, "what a poetical compliment, was it not? What a sensation he will create amongst the fair damsels of the City if he has only got a tolerable stock of them to distribute."

"I don't think, Annette," replied Master Jacquot, "that my young friend would associate much with the ladies you mention, if you were to bestow a little of your own society upon him."

"There are worse associations to be formed," retorted the brunette, "than the worst that are to be picked up in the City; for in the city, they at least marry *à la St. Jaques*, while your St. Simonians of Rue des Vingt-un would abolish marriage altogether. No woman would bestow her society on a man who courts the society of Rue des Vingt-un." And she left the room, once more casting a significant glance at Adolphe.

"Faith, Master Jacquot," he said, after a pause, "as to your associations being unpopular with the old women, it seems to me that the young ones are still more violently prejudiced against them. What can be the cause of this? for if your associations

have no other object than to improve the condition of the working man by guaranteeing to him a fair recompence for his labour, the working man's wife has as great an interest in promoting their success as he can possibly have himself."

"The cause is this," replied the locksmith. "You will not be surprised to hear, that the manufacturers and tradesmen, who have grown wealthy by the oppression of labour, are bitterly hostile to the project of the working classes associating for their own protection in future, and that they spare no means to ridicule it, and render it odious in the eyes of the working classes themselves. Having money, they can of course command hireling pens for this insidious purpose; and those villanous Swiss have laboured, with some success, to misrepresent the objects of our societies, by confounding them with the theories of certain social revolutionists, who are in no wise connected with the working classes at all. There are the disciples of St. Simon, in particular, against whose doctrines our pretty little brunette was just now so enraged. St. Simon holds that a man's partiality for his own children incapacitates him from behaving honestly and fairly by the general interest; and, consequently, that the distinction of families should be abolished, and one great family be constituted of the existing antagonist elements of society, by fusing them into a new condition of homogeneous equality. Can you wonder that a scheme which proposes to extinguish all domestic sympathies, and sever all the relations of family, is peculiarly offensive to a woman?"

"And you might say," interposed Adolphe, "disgusting to the feelings of a man. Such a scheme is as monstrous in conception as it would be diabolical in operation. But what has this to do with the working classes associating to secure themselves a fair reward for their labour by a voluntary organization, which shall restrain them from their present injurious competition for employment?"

"Nothing whatever," replied the locksmith; "but the scribes of the *bourgeoisie* have been very unscrupulous, and not altogether without effect, in propagating such an impression. The levelling principles of the St. Simonians, and other Communists, and the associations of the industrial classes for their own protection, are only different parts of the same plan. The Communists base the necessity of their social reorganizations on the dangerous, because almost intolerably wretched, condition of the industrial classes, and profess their object to be the amelioration of that condition; and, still further, they presume to demand the execution of their schemes, in the name of the industrial classes: because they do these things, the enemies of the industrial classes reproach them with being contaminated by the principles of these innovators, and impute to all their own efforts for the amelioration of their condition, the same mischievous or chimerical designs *in secret* as these, their impudently self-elected patrons, avow openly. It is in vain that the working men repudiate all alliance, and disavow all concordance with these dreaming Communists; they persevere in damaging our cause by their advocacy, and the organs of the middle orders drown our disclaimers of it by their noisy exultations over the mischief which is thus done us."

Although the object of André Jacquot was to make a proselyte of Adolphe, and although his aim, therefore, in this conversation, was to avoid shocking him by too abrupt a disclosure of the project of the association, of which he was, in fact, himself one of the most persevering and effective apostles, he did not wander far from the truth in his exposition of the real relations which existed between the Communist writers and the working classes. André was, for his own part, too selfish a man to care anything about the "beatitudes" which were to flow from the social regeneration of St. Simon or Fourier; and as to the mass of his confederates, he knew, that whatever advantages they might hope from revolutionizing the relations between the employer and the employed,

they had no faith in the Communists' reveries of universal fraternity and equality, and would have felt a decided aversion to them if they had. He knew, in fact, that, as regarded the labour question, *liberty* was the only watchword in the famous triplet which had any magic in it for the workmen—emancipation from the servitude of the capitalist, and elevation to the condition of an independent producer; these, he saw, were the hopes which animated him; and he saw, too, that they only tolerated the idea of being reduced to a common level with the hewers of wood and the drawers of water before they felt that, if it was not impracticable in itself, they could easily render it so when the zealot missionaries of "fraternity" and "equality" should attempt to carry it into execution.*

So far, therefore, the locksmith stated the case very fairly; and Adolphe cannot be blamed if he was more than half convinced by him; for the right of workmen to associate for the protection of their labour is admitted even in this country, so long as they do not molest the independence of the labour of others. But still Adolphe was not dealt by with good faith by the locksmith, for the latter had not stated the case fully. He stated fairly enough the object of the association, but he did not state the means by which the association sought to accomplish it. The locksmith saw that he was not yet in a sufficiently forward state for the reception of the important secret, that though a social revolution—a revolution in the relations between capital and labour—was the end, a

* The scenes in this part of our story are "laid" several years ago; and that Communism could not have been very fashionable among the lower orders then, is evident from the little influence which they lately exercised in the election of the National Assembly. The preponderance of Conservatism in that body is certainly to be accounted for by the fact that the agricultural class comprise nearly three-fourths of the whole population in France, and therefore possesses (under any elective system of universal suffrage on the broadest scale) three-fourths of the suffrages; and as the great portion of this class are owners of the soil, the equal partition of land and property was not likely to be popular with them.

political revolution was to be the means of effecting it. Indeed, in this first lesson, he did not even impart to his pupil that the organization of labour, irrespective and independent of any change in the form of government, is something of vastly greater importance than the mere establishment of a fair tariff of wages.

"But come," said the locksmith, at the point of the discourse where we broke off, "if you are willing to attend our meeting in the Rue des Vingt-un, it is time that we were moving; if not, I must leave you to your repose."

Adolphe, thoroughly disarmed of his suspicions, and a little desirous, moreover, to show Mademoiselle Annette that he was not to be so easily hoaxed into a mystification, resolved to accompany him.

CHAPTER V.

"We have not far to go," said the locksmith, when they had left the cabaret of the widow Cremy; "and therefore I must give, rather abruptly, a few particulars respecting the place we are about to visit. In the first place, there is no such street in the map of Paris as the Rue des Vingt-un. Our *séances* are held in a *cul-de-sac* in the Rue Mouffetard; there our permanent committee of *twenty-one* administers the affairs of the association, and hence we call our place of rendezvous amongst ourselves, the Rue des Vingt-un."

"From the fact of a perfect stranger, like myself," remarked Adolphe, "being admitted to witness your proceedings, I should have supposed that there was no such secrecy about them, as is implied by the use of false names; and another fact led me to the same conclusion, namely, that the knowledge of this key to your place of meeting, is in possession of our hostess and her niece, neither of whom are favourable to your projects."

"As to the latter point," replied the locksmith, "I must inform you that the whole of our resident brotherhood are members of the *Association du Travail;* and 'our mother,' and all connected with her household, are bound not to babble of what they hear in her own house. And as to yourself, I should not be able to pass you as a stranger, if I were not a member of the 'twenty-one.' If a private member of the association wishes to introduce a friend, he must first satisfy a member of the 'twenty-one' that his friend's object is an honourable, and not a hostile one."

"I must confess," said Adolphe, "that so much precaution is not much to my taste; and surely, such a doctrine as the right of labour to its reward might be preached in the open air, instead of being whispered in holes and corners amongst its followers, as if it were some blasphemous heresy which mankind would not endure."

"Alas! my young friend," replied the locksmith, "in this oppressed country, we are not permitted to assemble in the open air, and talk of any rights, much less of those rights which the rich have filched from the poor."

"Is this the case?" exclaimed the astonished youth.

"It is," replied the locksmith. "Even in England, the poor may meet together by thousands and tens of thousands, to discuss any question which affects their welfare, without molestation—even in enslaved Ireland, the Saxon despots do not refuse the victims of their tyranny the precious privilege of meeting and complaining of their sufferings. But if we were to do the same, the pretorian guards of Paris would be down upon us; and if these *bourgeoisie* bands were not sufficient, the city would be cleared of us by showers of canister and grape."

"This is a sad look-out," exclaimed the youth.

"It is, indeed," rejoined the locksmith; "and hence, as lovers of peace, and abhorrers of bloodshed, we skulk into holes and corners, in order to prosecute the work of our regeneration, without hazarding an unequal conflict with the authorities. And if we demand some security of good faith from the strangers who are admitted to witness our proceedings, it is because we would avoid even being misrepresented to those who only want an excuse to attack us; and because we are anxious to preserve our proceedings from wanton interruption and discord. Are we not right?"

"Certainly," answered Adolphe, completely carried away by the sophistries of the locksmith. "I admire both your humanity and

judgment; you will have merited the arrival of that great day, of which I have heard you speak, whenever it pleases Providence that the sun shall shine upon your cause."

"Stop," said the locksmith; "we have arrived at our destination. Follow me; take care of your head, and mind how you step."

They were now in a dirty avenue of lofty houses—for it did not deserve the name of a street—and the locksmith, turning under a low archway, disappeared from it into a still more dirty alley, which lay considerably below the level of the street. There were no steps to assist the descent; and, had not the locksmith assisted him, Adolphe would have tumbled into it on all fours. The atmosphere struck with a damp chill, while the odours which arose for a moment persuaded him that they must have immerged into the *embouchure* of an enormous sewer. By the slippery sloping of the ground, however, he discovered that he was on the crown of a narrow causeway, below which, on each side for about fifty yards, ran a line of buildings, terminated by a transverse building of the same kind. His guide, after keeping the middle of the road half way up the alley, again cautioned him to be careful of his steps; and not without occasion; for while the soil on the centre of the footway was a superstratum of thick, tenacious mud, which seemed to perplex the pedestrian like birdlime, the sides of it, which faced the ground-floor of the houses below, and upon which the inhabitants were accustomed to fling all their slops and vegetable refuse, were as perilous to descend as a greased plank. Adolphe, even with the locksmith's hand to steady him, did not accomplish the feat without "coming down by the run" at last, and receiving rather a *stunning* reception from the brick wall which arrested his career.

To a summons which the locksmith gently served with his knuckles, a door was opened, and Adolphe was led into a large apartment, which seemed to be literally on the *ground* floor, for

it did not appear to have ever been paved or even levelled, but was as uneven as the footway they had just left. By the light of a couple of resin candles, Adolphe could perceive that in this damp, gloomy, and fœtid apartment, there were still two weavers at work; and from a rotten bedstead, furnished with a mattress, and a ragged coverlid of faded patchwork, he concluded that one or both of them made this unwholesome and cheerless subterranean refuge their dormitory as well as their workshop.

"*Mon Dieu,*" whispered Adolphe to his companion, "I had no idea that so much wretchedness existed in any part of the world."

"You see the *ouvriers* of Paris,"* returned the other. "There are tens of thousands such; can you wonder that they wish for a change?"

The locksmith now led the way up a crazy staircase to an upper floor, and thence to one still higher, which Adolphe expected to find pretty numerously occupied, from the shuffling

* "Following the calculations of M. Trégoire, head of the office of prefecture of police, there are in Paris two hundred and thirty-five thousand workpeople of all ages and both sexes, at the relaxed period, and two hundred and sixty-five thousand during the period of full activity in trade. Of this number, according to the same calculations, there are thirty-five thousand individuals who, plunged into the depths of vice by want and ignorance, struggle and groan in an agonizing despair. As for the wretched beings who seek a livelihood only by a criminal industry—such as thieves, swindlers, forgers, receivers, women of the town, and their bullies—they form a total of thirty thousand and seventy-two formidable figures!—which, added to the preceding thirty-three thousand, make, in all, above sixty-three thousand of every age and sex, forming that array of evil which Paris contains and supports. Besides, there are the retreats where are to be found the population of misdoers, whom the police know without having sufficient proof to arrest. In the heart of the capital of the civilized world—in its infected quarters—in streets full of hideous mysteries—there are a number of houses where, for two sous (one penny), is sold a night's repose. The author of the work on the 'Dangerous classes,' says that the number of lodging-houses of the lowest grade amounted in 1836 to two hundred and forty-three, and that they altogether contained a population of six thousand lodgers, of which one-third were women living by prostitution or robbery."—Louis Blanc.

of feet which he had heard above his head. He found nearly a hundred persons assembled here, constituting, to judge by their arrangement, a very business-like assembly. At the farthest end of the room sat the chairman, on a platform slightly raised above the floor; and beneath him, round a table, sat the other members of the council, with reports and other papers before them. The rest of the company were seated on terraces of forms running parallel with the walls, which would have afforded accommodation for five times the number who were gathered together on the present occasion. For the better understanding of what follows, it is necessary to premise, that the committee or council of *twenty-one*, consisted of representative delegates of twenty-one of the most numerous branches of the great community of skilled workmen; and that each of these deputies to the General Association was elsewhere president of a confederate association of his own particular trade. Hence the club, in the midst of which Adolphe found himself, was the directing genius of twenty-one other clubs in various parts of Paris, to all of whom as simultaneous an action could be given, when required, as if they had been formed into one aggregate body. This peculiar constitution of the association was in the first instance adopted, in order to avoid attracting the notice of the government; and as it was found in practice that the general body, thus organized into parts, could be wielded, not only with less noise, but with more ease, than if consentaneous motion could be imparted to them *en masse*, the confederation was preserved in its original form.

The business on hand at the moment was the presentation of a Report of the "State of Labour" at Troyes. The chairman read the paragraphs as to the state of each department of labour separately, and the delegate of that department in the association then rose and corroborated the facts reported.

CHAIRMAN (reading).—"Carpenters. There are twenty-five

masters, employing one hundred and twenty workmen, at daily wages averaging two francs."

DELEGATE CARPENTER.—"I protest against two francs. We risk our lives daily, and are employed only eight months in the year. Had we not better die on the frontier, than toil for the *bourgeoisie* at home, fasting every other day during two-thirds of the year, to be absolutely starved during the remainder? I thus pronounce on the report." (Applause.)

CHAIRMAN.—"Shoemakers. There are eighty masters, employing one hundred and forty workmen at daily wages averaging one and a half francs."

DELEGATE SHOEMAKER.—"I pronounce against one and a half francs. A master spending three thousand francs a year, lives by the labour of two workmen, to whom he barely allows five hundred each. Is it a just partition, where the *bourgeois*, who does nothing, keeps to himself six times as much as he allows to the workman who does all? This is an odious tyranny! and I thus pronounce on the report." (Much applause.)

CHAIRMAN.—"Weavers. There are six hundred in number employed at piece-work, by which they can average one franc per day."

DELEGATE WEAVER.—"I pronounce against one franc. A machine, which costs in construction, wear and tear, and attendance, forty francs per day, will make as many yards as forty men; hence, say the *bourgeoisie*, the value of a human being is only one franc a day. Everything is estimated now by the profit which the *bourgeois* can make of it, and human beings are no more to them than the brute creation or inanimate matter. But has not God endowed human beings with feelings and appetites, and charged upon them to educate families, and cultivate their intelligence; and does not the State which confirms the *bourgeoisie* to make war upon us with machinery, till we are gradually being exterminated by fatigue and want, rebel against these laws and

ordinances of heaven? I thus pronounce on the Report." (Loud bravos.)

CHAIRMAN.—"Locksmiths. There are twenty masters, who employ about ninety workmen, at daily wages averaging two francs."

DELEGATE LOCKSMITH (André Jacquot).—"I pronounce against two francs per day. The master says that he cannot afford more—he says that the prices of his wares are so fallen that the labour of a workman will not produce a value in them of two francs, unless he works thirteen hours a day. But why are the prices of his wares so fallen? The thirteen hours a day explain alike the workman's wrong, and the master's punishment: goaded by the evil spirits of avarice and tyranny to extract from the workmen the utmost amount of labour which nature can sustain, the master has only made the workman a fatal instrument of hideous *over production* which has crushed him with the weight of the false riches for which he stained his soul with the sins of rapacity and inhumanity. The workman is the victim of a double conspiracy, of a conspiracy of the masters against him, and of a conspiracy amongst the masters against each other; for while they are all in one mind to oppress the workman, every one is bent upon ruining his competitors. And what is the game at which they play in this laudable pursuit of riches, at each other's expense? Cheapness—who can sell the cheapest! Yes,—cheapness—that is, cheapening the skill and labour of the workman; for they cannot cheapen, on the contrary they enhance, the price of the raw material by their greater demand for manufacture. Was there ever at once such wickedness and such folly—such injustice to the interests of others, and such ignorance of their own—as these employers display? And yet to these unfeeling and reckless men, who repudiate all considerations of either equity or system, are confided under our existing *ordre social*, the control of the labour and the regulation of the production of the country!

Their control of labour results, not in organization for the benefit of all, but in tyranny exclusively for their own; and this regulation of production, not in a steady adjustment of the supply to the demand, but in a headlong race of unlimited competition which is ruinous to every member of the great family of industry, from the highest to the lowest. Do we not need a better organization of labour than they are willing or able to give us—an organization which shall secure the ingenious locksmiths of Troyès something more commensurate with their merits than a miserable, and even precarious pittance of two francs a day? I have thus pronounced upon the report."

The applause was vehement when André Jacquot sat down, and Adolphe mentally concurred in it—so captivating are specious errors when they have only to be contrasted with real anomalies. Several other speeches followed from others of the "Twenty-one," the remarkable feature in them all being this, that each speaker addressed himself, with point and effect, to illustrate some axiom of the new political economy which was springing up in France, in opposition to the old one of *laissez-faire*—such as the tyranny of capital, the mischiefs of competition, the organization of the independence of labour, and the like.

When the report had been thus discussed in detail, a motion was made that it should be printed, with the *prononcés* of the "Twenty-one" upon it, and circulated, not only among the members of the association, but in all the most populous districts throughout the kingdom. This motion was carried; and probably no better scheme of propagandism could have been devised, than the extensive circulation of these brief documents with the pithy commentaries of such men as André Jacquot upon them.

The chairman now announced that the *comité* of Five was about to resolve themselves into committee. Immediately all the other members present, including those of the "Twenty-one" who were not on the *comité*, rose and prepared for departure.

The *dissolving away*, for dissolution would not be a proper expression, occupied nearly a quarter of an hour. André Jacquot, who happened not to be on the *comité*, was the last of the *Twenty-one*, similarly circumstanced, to leave the table, after some earnest conversation with his colleagues; and, rejoining Adolphe, whom he had left on one of the side forms, took his arm and said, "we must now go, my friend!"

Seated again in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the *serruriers* at the Widow Cremy's, the locksmith called for another bottle of sealed wine, and, as Annette placed it on the table, asked of Adolphe how he had been amused on the Rue des Vingt-un.

Annette looked at Adolphe now, not as she did before by way of warning, but as if she was moved by a painful curiosity.

"To say the truth," replied Adolphe, who thought still of the net of mystification, "I must tell Mademoiselle Annette that I never was less amused in my life. People talked such things—such *niaiseries* about St. Jaques and St. Simon, who may be respectable martyrs for anything I know to the contrary, but who certainly are not the St. Jaques and the St. Simon of the Calendars—that I began to think—"

"What?" interrupted Annette, eagerly.

"To think that I had something yet to learn," answered Adolphe, resolved that she should have enigma for enigma.

"Pooh! Annette," interposed the locksmith, "my young friend could not understand our *argot*, and therefore, in respect of that, he has something to learn; but, in respect of the *argot* of your convincing eyes, that is the language which every young man feels, if he does not understand—nay, now, if you look so cross, I must call '*la mère.*'"

"I am not allowed to speak, Master Jacquot," said the girl, evidently repressing her temper, "or ——"

"Or what" said the locksmith, as he tossed off a glass of wine with an air of nonchalance.

"Master Jacquot," replied the girl, "you know what I would say if I could."

"Fie, Annette!" said the locksmith, with a gravity that even the unsophisticated Adolphe thought was assumed. "Fie, Annette; women should never unlock the secrets of their own bosoms to men."

"Well, let it pass," said the vexed girl. "I will—no I cannot!" And she was about to leave the room.

"Annette, *ma chère*," said the locksmith, "you must not go thus."

"What is your wish, Master Jacquot!" she answered, suddenly relapsing into the mere servant of a cabaret.

"Simply, my daughter, that you will pay every attention to Monsieur Adolphe Renouard, as if he were my son. You will give me your right hand on that?"

"Yes, I will," said Annette, "and my other hand to him on that same troth," and she held out her left hand to Adolphe.

Adolphe took the liberty of imprinting on it a gentle, very gentle kiss.

"And now, Annette," said the locksmith, "you must retire, for I wish a few minutes conversation with my young friend, as to his movements to-morrow; for in Paris none of *us*, at least, can get a living without working for it, and a great many of us cannot get a living by working for it, if we would."

Annette left the room without any further attempt at mystifying Adolphe. The locksmith seemed to possess an influence by which he could, at pleasure, curb her propensity for conversation.

"Well," he said, "now that we have finished our *badinage* with that little flirt, what did you really think of what you heard at our re-union in Rue des Vingt-un?"

"My answer," replied Adolphe, "is the same as I gave for the information of 'the little flirt,' as you most ungallantly call her, and as I would give for the information of all the world—from

what I heard in the Rue des Vingt-un, I began to think that I had something yet to learn."

"Indeed, you are mistaken," said the locksmith; "there is only one thing to learn in unhappy France, and that you have unconsciously learned long before you ever dreamed of coming to Paris."

"Now, do not you, Master Jacquot, try to mystify me," remonstrated Adolphe, "after having saved me from the, perhaps, more agreeable mystifications of our pretty brunette."

"Allow me to reveal you to yourself," continued the locksmith, without noticing the interruption. "Have you not learned, since you were a child capable of knowing that it was your lot to provide for yourself as a man, that there was some one thing which would oppress all your energies throughout life, as it has oppressed the energies of your father before you? Have you, I say, not felt this from the moment you ever dreamed of manhood, love, and independence?"

"Truly, I have," answered Adolphe. "I have felt this, and it has been my nightmare even by day. But what is it after all? Simple poverty, Master Jacquot."

"And is poverty, my young friend," returned the locksmith, "anything more than the darkness—the darkness that is felt—of the oppression which overshadows us, and stunts our growth by intercepting from us the sunshine of heaven, which is intended for all who move and breathe beneath its glorious canopy? *Poverty* is your phantom! Embody it. It has hunted you from the pleasant fields of your rural birthplace, to shelter yourself from it in such hideous places as you have seen to-day—but I say embody it, and give it a name."

"But I know no other name for it," Master Jacquot, "save the one I have given—poverty," replied Adolphe, modestly; for he now began to feel the intellectual superiority of his companion.

"Tell me," said the locksmith, "why did you leave home?"

"Frankly, then," answered the youth, "because our family estate is mortgaged, and I feared, that if I remained another year a burden on my father, the mortgagee would go unpaid, and bundle us all out together by a foreclosure."

"Then is it not the phantom of the mortgagee before which you have fled?" asked the locksmith—"before the bourgeois mortgagee! I have said that there is only one thing to learn in unhappy France, and that you unconsciously learned long before you dreamed of coming to Paris; and is it not true? The bourgeois is everywhere—not only in Paris or in Troyés, but wherever poverty is—there is he, fattening in idleness, while those who toil are starving, or afraid of starving. If we slave for him in the workshop, others slave for him in the fields. You have changed the scene, my young friend, by coming to Paris, but you have not changed your condition. But you will be able to judge for yourself after a very short experience. I will call for you in the morning at sunrise, and take you to the Place de Grève, where unskilled labourers, like yourself, resort in order to find an employer."

The locksmith then shook Adolphe by the hand, and enjoining upon him that while he remained at the widow Cremy's he was to consider himself free of all charge in a pecuniary sense, bade him good night.

CHAPTER VI.

ADOLPHE had remained alone for some time, musing on the extraordinary revelations which had then, for the first time, awakened in him a new sense—a sense that as a man he had a duty to perform, and a struggle to go through with the world, for the amendment of his condition and the assertion of rights which before he had not conceived were either due to him or denied to him. "The locksmith is right," he said, internally; the *bourgeoisie* is everywhere, consuming in idleness what the poor produce with sweating brows and blistered hands. The condition of the poor, indeed, is only a disguised sort of slavery; for what is the main feature in the condition of the slave, but that he must plough and reap, and have no portion in the harvest except what the avarice of his master grudgingly accords to him. To be sure the slave is kept to his ill requited task by the terror of the lash; but what lash is more terrible than that of hunger, which compels the submission of the *travailleur* to his employer as effectually as the cracking of the slave-driver's whip. It cannot be but a '*bon jour*,' as André Jacquot has it, when these abominable oppressions shall be done away with."

After a pause in his reverie, his thoughts wandered in another direction.

"And there is the bourgeois mortgagee, too—may the devil confound him! My father and grandfather must have repaid him and his the money they borrowed at least three times over and yet his lawful claim is not diminished a sou. *Lawful!* ay,

there it is. The *bourgeoisie* make the laws, and by means of them thus keep us in everlasting bondage. It is time that we had some hand in making the laws ourselves; and, if we had, we would take care to do ourselves justice. But for bourgeois laws, I should not have been compelled to fly from home to try my fortune here; but as they have forced me hither, they must accept me such as this cruel necessity has made me. I will never forget that it is the bourgeois who has separated poor Marie and me for years—and, perhaps, for ever."

His reflections were disturbed by the entrance of Annette.

"Do you not feel inclined for a little supper, Monsieur Adolphe?" she said, without any show of pique or flirtation, but on the contrary with that kind *empressement* which Frenchwomen know so well how to throw into their tone and manner, without seeming either forward or coquettish. "My aunt has retired, and I have prepared a *tête-à-tête* repast for ourselves, if you think that you can trust yourself with me alone, with a barricade of cold fowl between us to protect us from each other."

"I must confess, Mlle Annette," replied Adolphe, "to a most unaccountable loss of appetite this evening."

"You forget the troth you plighted me just now," said the maiden, "that I should be permitted to treat you as André Jacquot's son: and assuredly André would not thank me if I was to permit a son of his to go supperless to bed. *Allons, mon cher ami.*"

Adolphe required no further pressing, but straightway accompanied Annette to the little bar, where a cold capon, a cured tongue, and a bottle of excellent wine were prepared for their repast. Adolphe eat sparingly, and while the meal was being discussed, Annette made no attempt to draw him into conversation. When it was at length concluded—

"Upon my word," she burst out, gaily, "I have better hopes of you after supper than I had before; and that is a comfort

cheaply purchased at the price of such a supper as you have just despatched."

"How so?" Mlle. Annette?" returned Adolphe. "I suppose you would choose a husband by the smallness of his appetite—a principle of economy which I confess to have never applied before at least to love matters."

"There you are quite wrong, as far as I am concerned," answered the girl. "The indifferent appetite which you have exhibited to-night is, on the contrary, the very reason why I would *not* choose you as a husband."

"Riddle upon riddle!" exclaimed Adolphe. "Pray let me entreat you for a solution of them in order as they come, or I shall never get my bewildered brains into anything like order again. Because I cannot eat heartily with you, you would not choose me for a husband! *Why?*"

"Simply," said Annette, "because an absent appetite, in the presence of a pretty capon——"

"And a very pretty girl!" interposed Adolphe.

"Yes—but you need not take the words out of my mouth," she continued——"denotes absent thought; and I would not choose you for a husband, because these absent thoughts, on such an interesting occasion, prove to demonstration——"

She stopped for a moment, while she looked archly into his face.

"Prove what?" asked Adolphe, eagerly.

"That you have already chosen some one else for your wife," she replied.

Adolphe burst into a laugh, while he blushed up to the eyes.

"Well," he said, when he had somewhat recovered himself, "you are as good as a witch. I plead guilty to the unworthy heresy of being in love with another; and, considering that the treason was committed while I was ignorant of the existence of a paragon to whom the allegiance of *all* true gallants must b[illegible]

due, I trust that you will consider there are circumstances of mitigation attending my involuntary crime."

Annette laughed heartily, in turn, at the tone of mock penitence with which this apology was uttered.

"Yes," she replied, "I do consider that there is one strong expiatory circumstance in your case; for (next to being in love with me, of course) I hold it to be a favourable feature in your case that you are in love with *some* woman—be she who she may."

"And this, then," said Adolphe, "is the reason why you have better hopes of me after supper than you had before."

"Yes," answered Annette, "a sincere and honourable attachment to a woman is a safeguard to a young man from a thousand follies and dangers. He has assigned over to another, under the most sacred of all bonds, a greater interest in his person and prospects than he even possesses himself, and he can do nothing to endanger either the one or the other without a gross violation of faith."

"You think, then, that love keeps a man out of harm's way?" inquired Adolphe.

"It *ought*, at least, to keep him out of rash enterprises," answered Annette; "for, if he truly loves, he will feel that, upon whatever hazardous undertaking he stakes his own existence, he must stake also the existence of another."

"From your abhorrence of rash enterprises, must I not conclude that you are in love yourself?" triumphantly rejoined Adolphe.

"Certainly I am in love, and hope to be all the days of my life," said Annette, without a blush. "To be in love is the normal condition of every woman."

"I should vastly like," continued Adolphe, "to have a sight of the fortunate youth who has secured such a heart as yours."

"He is well worthy of it," returned Annette. "He has given

a large price for it, for Cassimir Laurent's own heart is one of the noblest which ever beat. But what have I done? I have revealed to you my secret, and I cannot be absolved from the sin except by your revealing to me yours in return. What is the name of the fortunate *girl* who seems in you to have secured almost as great a prize as I have in my Cassimir?"

"Well, it is best for us," said Adolphe, smiling, "to have no half or one-sided confidences. The name of my goddess is Marie Meulen."

"And where does she live?"

"At Autun," replied Adolphe.

"Stop," said Annette, suddenly rising; "I think that I hear my aunt stirring above stairs," and she hurriedly left the bar. In less than two minutes she returned.

"My aunt only wondered," she said, "with whom I could be carrying on such an animated conversation in the bar. She had fallen asleep, and forgotten whom André Jacquot had left in my charge."

"It is to the influence of my new friend, André Jacquot," observed Adolphe, "that I am indebted for permission to enjoy this charming *tête-à-tête* with my fair keeper?"

"Yes; André Jacquot has great influence with my aunt," she replied. "He was the bosom friend of her late husband, whom he has succeeded as president of the Companionship of Serruriers. Besides, André—I must never withhold the credit due to him for such an act—endeavoured to save my uncle's life at the risk of his own."

"He did not succeed, then?" inquired Adolphe,—his curiosity highly excited by an adventure of which he had heard no particulars.

"No," answered Annette, mournfully. "My unfortunate uncle was shot dead as André was carrying him off in his arms, amidst

a shower of musket-balls,—the same ball striking them both down, though it did not prove fatal to André.

"*Mon Dieu!* when and where was this?" asked the young man.

"In 1832, and at the funeral of General Lamarque," answered the girl.

"I have heard of the outbreak on that occasion," observed Adolphe, "but nothing as to the cause or consequences of it."

"Would it might be the last outbreak of the sort!" fervently exclaimed Annette. "The scenes I witnessed during those dreadful days have haunted me ever since; for I have not the same taste in these matters as our *Parisiennes* too generally have. But, alas, I *know* that other and more fearful outbreaks will succeed it; and my timid nature—for I am Provençal by birth and education—often makes me shudder at the thought."

"Pshaw! Annette," interrupted Adolphe, "your fears must be groundless; for the government, after such a terrible alarm, must have taken sufficient precautions to prevent similar *émeutes*."

"But how is it, then," inquired Annette, "that the government have never been able to discover the secret springs which set that insurrection on foot, or even to form an opinion whether Louis Philippe's deadly foes on that occasion were the Carlists or the democrats, or both? My firm opinion is, that the government neither know the nature nor the strength of the enemy who is only waiting until some accident in his favour shall enable him to attack it with greater chance of success. That enemy is neither to be met with in the *salons* of the Faubourg St. Germain, nor on the Republican benches in the Chambers. He is concealed, as it were, in the subterranean volcano of which he is himself the fiery element, to be cast up again, at no distant day perhaps, to disfigure and desolate the land!"

"Indeed, Annette," replied Adolphe, "I think that the scenes which you say you witnessed have inflicted a shock upon your nerves which, on this particular subject, has somewhat affected

your judgment. And whom do you suspect this terrible and secret enemy of the government to be?"

Annette rose, and bending over the table, whispered to Adolphe—

"The WORKMAN OF PARIS!"

Adolphe was more stunned by this whispered communication than he would have been had a peal of thunder burst forth directly above his head. For a time, he was utterly confounded, and was unable rationally to collate the facts connected with his visit to the Rue des Vingt-un with Annette's speculations. He gazed on the face of his companion with that stare of doubt and surprise which bespeaks the very vacancy of wonder. By degrees, however, he collected his scattered ideas, and remained silent for a minute or two, his face buried in his hands, as if a light had fallen upon his eyes which they were unable to endure.

"Well, Annette," he at last said, "you may be right; but, at any rate, there is one way of escape from this great danger for the government, if they will submit to adopt it."

"And what is that?" inquired Annette. "If I, a poor simple girl, can perceive a danger to which Louis Philippe and his ministers are blind, it is not more improbable that you should see a way of escape from it, which, I confess, I do not."

"What is it that makes the 'WORKMAN OF PARIS' dangerous but his despair? and what inspires him with despair but his sense that his condition is not only intolerable, but, under the existing order of things, incurable? Cannot the government amend this order of things, and thus improve the workman's condition? All that they have to do is, to consent that he shall be able to live by being assured of a sufficient reward for his industry and skill."

"No, my friend," returned Annette, "be assured that if Louis Philippe were to consent to this, he would cease to reign

tomorrow. The *bourgeoisie*, who have made him, would unmake him; and this he knows full well. The rich will not surrender without a struggle the advantages they have secured to themselves over the poor,—and in that struggle, though the rich might not come out of it uppermost, the king would be crushed. If the working-classes and the king could unite together, they might put down the *bourgeoisie*,—but such a union is hopeless; and, therefore, the only possible policy for the king is, to confederate with the rich to keep down the working-classes. The king, indeed, has only a choice of difficulties; and choose which he will, it must be fatal to him at last."

"You seem to have studied this matter deeply, Annette," observed Adolphe.

"Why, the truth is," replied Annette, "my preceptor in these matters is Cassimir Laurent, who takes them much to heart himself; for, though in the municipal guard, so much does he loathe the idea of a civil war, that were it not for me, he would apply to be drafted into any regiment on foreign service,—where he could be only required to draw his sword against the stranger."

"And is this feeling generally prevalent amongst the regular soldiery of Paris?" inquired Adolphe.

"I believe so," answered Annette; "but they are not all actuated by such refined sentiments and patriotic scruples as Cassimir. But come, it is time that you took yourself to bed, for André will call you early in the morning, and you will find some slight refreshment laid out for you in the club-room."

"A thousand thanks, Mlle Annette," returned Adolphe, "and I shall not forget to tell André how abundantly you have redeemed your pledge to treat me as if I were his son—or, indeed, a brother of your own."

In spite of the novel and agitating scenes through which he

had passed during the preceding few hours, Adolphe slept soundly, dreamed of nothing but Marie and Annette alternately, and was up, according to his custom, with the sun, though it did not shine upon him as it was wont in his own bedroom at Autun.

CHAPTER VII.

DESCENDING to the club room, Adolphe found a very agreeable breakfast laid for two—namely, the relics of the last night's supper, a jug of new milk, some exquisite bread and butter, and a few cold boiled eggs. "Well," thought he, as he contemplated these good things, "this is no indifferent fare, at any rate; but it is hardly a prudent way, Mlle Annette, of preparing me for that with which I must be content, when I arrive at the privilege of catering for myself."

He was scarcely seated, when the locksmith, true to his appointment, entered the room.

"*Comment!*" he said, taking a place at the table; "I see that our little Annette has not forgotten the rites of hospitality, in *one* respect at least, though I should much doubt whether she has not forgotten them in another."

"I have not the slightest notion, Master Jacquot," replied Adolphe, "of the allusion intended to be conveyed by that significant smile of yours; but I can assure you, that Mlle Annette has treated me with a kindness and frankness which her manner at first did not lead me to expect from her."

"And you, of course, were equally kind and *frank* in return," curtly observed the locksmith; "but help yourself to some breakfast; for, on second thoughts, I would suggest whether you had not better see something of the diversions of Paris before you condemn yourself to its drudgery; and if so, as time is money with both of us, we should make the most of it."

"With all my heart," said Adolphe, "for I saw sufficient

of Paris even yesterday, to make me anxious to see more of it; and it will not signify much, whether I am initiated as a *travailleur* to-day or to-morrow."

"I was not talking, my young friend," answered the locksmith, "of the mere architectural wonders of Paris; few of which a sensible Frenchman should regard in any other light than as monuments of the oppression and servitude to which his forefathers had been subjected. It is said, that the palaces, and other great public works of Paris, are in themselves an illustrated history of France,—and what is that history, but a history of successive tyrannies, from the earliest times of which we have any records, even to this day. There is only one bright spot in the long dark vista of French history—the glorious '89; and that glorious year has left us no monuments, except the ruins of those which were raised, in times past, to gratify the pride and vanity of despotism."

"For my part," observed Adolphe, "I would rather view such monuments under a different aspect."

"Yes," said the locksmith; "you would cheat the understanding to please the eye; and, alas! it is a fondness for such illusions which has caused Frenchmen, in all ages, to shut their eyes to the stern truth of their own miserable condition. What, let me ask you, is the only historical fact which we can infer from the pyramids of Egypt? Is it not that the people must have been slaves, who performed such enormous tasks, merely to perpetuate the memory of the tyrants who exacted from them such a terrible servitude? And, two thousand years hence, what will the world infer from the Arc de l'Etoile, if it should be standing, but a fact of the same kind?"

"These reflections of yours, Master Jacquot," returned Adophe, "appear specious enough; but they are so new to me, that I am unfit to decide on their justice: and, besides, as you do lecture to-day on the Tuileries, the Louvre, &c., let us rather talk of those

subjects which you propose for my first lessons of observation or experience in Paris."

"Agreed," said the locksmith. "The course I propose for you is, first to study the people, of which I have such a choice collection of specimens to show you. When you know what the people are, it will be time to consider how they have become what they are. When you have finished your breakfast, we will set forth."

"I am quite ready," returned Adolphe; "but tell me, am I likely to return here again? For if not, I must not abscond without thanking our good hostess and her niece for their kindness and attention to me."

The locksmith rang the little bell which lay on the table, and presently Annette entered.

"Annette, if my friend should fail to find employment to-day," said the locksmith, "I suppose you will accommodate him with his old quarters."

"With pleasure," answered Annette.

"Then *allons*," said the locksmith, leading the way out of the room. Adolphe turned for a moment to shake Annette by the hand, and as he bowed his head, with respectful gallantry, to imprint upon it a kiss, she whispered in his ear—"In every doubt, think of M. M., and the recollection of her may save you from danger."

Adolphe, by a look, acknowledged that he understood her; and assuring her by a significant nod that he would not forget her advice, said "Adieu" aloud, and descended into the common room after the locksmith.

It was a beautiful morning, when they issued forth into the street; but the cloudless sky was of that deep azure hue which is a prognostic of rain before noon.

"In less than two hours," said André, "we shall have a change of weather, and, therefore, the quicker we go about such work as

we can do out of doors, the better;" and they at once pushed forward at a brisk rate towards the city, by the same road as they had left.

The locksmith, as they approached the Place de Grève, moderated his pace.

"There are very strange recollections, Master Adolphe," he said, "connected with yonder open space before the Hôtel de Ville."

"And melancholy ones too, if my memory serves me," responded Adolphe. "The guillotine has done its bloody work here, I believe, as well as elsewhere, in less enlightened days."

"And for aught we know, may do it again," said the locksmith.

"Now, God forbid!" exclaimed Adolphe; "and I would fain hope, that a recurrence of such hideous and revolting scenes is impossible."

"Impossible?" returned the locksmith. "It is no matter what the age of the world may be, the laws which regulate its motions, physically and morally, are ordained to remain immutable to the last day of its existence, as an unit of the infinite universe; and hence, like causes in every age will produce like effects."

"But the causes which produced the Revolution of '89, are in operation no longer," interposed the youth.

"The *same* causes are not," replied the other, "but *similar* causes are; and hence, though the effects of the Revolution which is now stirring in the womb of time, will not be the *same* as those of the Revolution of '89, they must be *similar* also."

"I do not quite comprehend the nature of the distinction you are drawing," said Adolphe.

"See, then," continued the locksmith. "In yonder open space, under the ancient *régime*, the *bourgeoisie* were accustomed to meet for the transaction of business. But though, as mer-

chants and traders, they represented no inconsiderable portion of the wealth of the nation, they had no share whatever in its representation, or the administration of its affairs. They were not recognised as citizens, but merely treated as *subjects*. They were an outcast class—almost as much so as the Jews in the middle ages,—and were looked down upon by the *noblesse* as at best a race of emancipated serfs. I imagine them congregated in this place, buying and selling, and settling their accounts, and thus keeping in motion all the productive industry of the country. Such important agents in the economy of a great kingdom, you would say, should command respect; or at least, they should not be treated with insult. But see! a file of menial lacqueys approach, in gaudy liveries, and, by insolent gestures, caution the merchants and bankers of Paris, that the most puissant Marquis de B., or most noble Count de C., is about to pass, and that they must disperse, lest the nostrils of a noble should be offended by the odour of a *bourgeois*. And yet, when the *bon jour* came in '89, the haughty *noblesse* were too happy to fraternize with the contemned *bourgeois*, at the price of voluntarily repudiating all their privileges, powers, distinctions, and pretensions. But the insults and wrongs of ages were not to be thus washed out. I need not tell you, by what a terrible purification the *bourgeoisie* at last washed out the stains with which tyranny had branded them, through long generations, with impunity."

"And how do these reminiscences apply to the present state of things?" inquired Adolphe.

"Why, there are antagonist classes now," replied the locksmith; "a domineering and a despised one—just as there was then. The grandsons of those merchants and bankers whom the lacqueys of the *noblesse* cleared out of the Place de Grève in the last century, ignominiously reviling them as serfs, plebeians, and clowns—the grandsons of these, even at the present time, inhabit

palaces, and roll in splendid equipages, attended by liveried lacqueys, as the *noblesse* did of old. At this moment, you see re-enacted the very scene of the last century which I have been picturing. Yonder comes M. de B., the rich banker, with the equipage of a prince; and mark how his outriders clear the *Place* of the crowd of ill-clad labourers who are assembled there to await the precarious chance of an ill-paid day's work. The *bourgeoisie* at this day stand in the same dangerous relation to the working classes, as in '89 the *noblesse* stood to the *bourgeoisie*."

"I do not say, Mr. Jacquot," observed Adolphe, "that you have brooded over your own presentiments until you have greatly exaggerated to yourself the dangers of the times; but I certainly hope that you will find that you have. I cannot believe that human nature is so sanguinary now as it was fifty years ago."

"There is no telling what change has really taken place in human nature," rejoined the locksmith, "until it is tried under some extreme provocation, pressure, or temptation. And I do not see how the disposition of the populace *can* be much changed for the better; for since '89 their condition has been growing worse, while the *bourgeoisie*, who trample upon them, have improved theirs by every change. But let us pass over into the City, where I have to meet a person on particular business; consider him your first *study* for the day."

Concluding thus, he led the way to the same bridge by which they had passed from the purlieus of Notre Dame the day before, but he now made for a different quarter of the island. It now began to rain, as the locksmith had predicted; and, revolting as was the impression which the close and fœtid lanes of the City produced upon him when he first visited it, his disgust was now immeasurably increased. As the rain descended, the refuse of fish and vegetables, and filth of every kind, was washed into the

swollen kennels which ran down the middle of the streets; and such a warm steam of horrible odours surcharged the atmosphere, that the stench, like an Egyptian darkness, was one that could be almost felt. Adolphe was about to protest against penetrating further, when the locksmith turned into a low *cabaret*, and he felt relieved by finding himself suddenly enveloped in a cloud of tobacco smoke, which, at another time, would have imparted to him a sense of partial suffocation.

It was some time before, in this densely fumigated room, he could make out, with any distinctness, the objects around him. There appeared to be a considerable number of people, in a long, ill-lighted room, seated on forms ranged by the sides of two oblong tables, the arrangement of the bar from whence the liquors were served being the same as at the *cabaret* where he had slept. Adolphe seated himself by the side of the locksmith, who informed him that the expected person had not yet arrived, and that therefore he must call for a small quantity of brandy, leaving it to Adolphe's option whether he would partake of it or not.

In a short time, a man entered, attired in a blouse, and wearing a fur cap on his head, and sat down opposite to the locksmith and Adolphe. His countenance wore a daring and dissipated, but not a repulsive, expression, and might have been considered agreeable, if not handsome, but for the imprints of recklessness and intemperance which it too evidently bore. Without ceremony, he filled the locksmith's glass, and tossed it off with a "*Sacré, serrurier!* but you know the best antidote against catching a cold as well as any man in the City."

"Have you breakfasted?" said the locksmith.

"What an idea, *serrurier!*" returned the stranger. "Did I not say that I would breakfast with you, and when did you ever know me break my *parole*—except once (he whispered) with the

prefect of police, and then, you know, it was most unhandsomely extorted under *duresse*."

"Well, then," said the other, "finish the brandy, and let us adjourn to a *gargote des terrassiers* close by. They will all have left before you have finished your soup, and then we can have our *tête-à-tête* quietly to ourselves. Certainly; call for some more brandy if you think that another dose will be good for that incurable cold of yours."

"Thank you," answered the stranger; "but you know that I am an old campaigner, and not only carry my canteen with me, but take care never to stir on an expedition, let it promise to be ever so short, without seeing that it is full. Always look to the commissariat, locksmith, for if you have vanquished your enemy before you get sight of him, you have nearly half beaten him."

Saying this, he took from his pocket an empty half-pint bottle, and the locksmith, having ordered it to be replenished, motioned Adolphe to follow, and left the *cabaret* with the stranger.

The *gargote*—that is, a low eating house where labourers and mechanics resort to purchase, for a few sous, a cheap meal of soup, vegetables, and meat, the two former of which serve them for breakfast, while the latter, with a little bread and a modicum of wine or water, supplies them with a dinner—was not far distant. When Adolphe followed the locksmith and his companion into the "banqueting" room, most of those who had lately regaled themselves there on the savoury, but not very substantial, soup for which the *gargote des terrassiers* (or terrace-makers) was famous, had pocketed their meat, and left the apartment; and in a very brief time, the rest disappeared, and our party was left alone.

"Now, La Bruyère, before we discuss anything else," said the locksmith, "discuss your breakfast—a question, I know, you can settle in a few minutes."

"Carried by acclamation!" said the other. "*Garçon*—never mind the soup, but let me have two dishes of meat instead, with vegetables."

The order was obeyed, and the prodigal meal, with the assistance of the brandy bottle, despatched with a celerity in due proportion to the *gourmand's* extravagance—that is, in double-quick time.

"And now, worthy La Bruyère," said the locksmith, "be as expeditious, if you can, with your tongue as you have been with your teeth."

"As in duty bound!" returned the other; "but another glass just to quiet the other three. Now, then, *serrurier*. Le Manant* sends word from Lyons, that unless you send them some relief from Paris, and that quickly, it will be impossible for the committee to restrain the locksmiths from an outbreak against the authorities. They have been existing on next to nothing for the last three weeks—and, Le Manant's words are, that 'you must either help them, or they will help themselves, and that will not be the way for them to help *you*.'"

"Le Manant is right," said the locksmith. "We must see what can be done; for if they were to take the initiative, the fruits of our forbearance for years would be lost. What from Marseilles?"

"There all is quiet, and in good order," answered La Bruyère. "I rode over to Le Roturier myself, and he promised that he would do his utmost to relieve the difficulties of Le Manant. I took back with me eight thousand francs, for one third of which he said he should draw on you, and for another third upon Le Vilain, at Toulon, as he thought it best, in such a case of emergency, to act on his own responsibility without consulting his council."

* *Le vilain*, the villain; *le roturier*, the plebeian; *le manant*, the clown. The presidents of these secret clubs corresponded in feigned names like these.

"That was quite right," said the locksmith. "We must prevent any rash proceedings which would involve the Lyonnaise with the government, at any price. But I have a scheme for effecting this by the agency of the government itself, and without any expense to ourselves at all."

At this moment a fourth person entered the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FAVOURABLE impresssion was produced upon Adolphe by the locksmith's seeming wish to check any seditious outbreak against the government. The latter observed this with satisfaction; for he felt assured that the unsophisticated though ardent youth could only be drawn into the dangerous "complicity," to which he was recruiting for adherents, by degrees; and that an affectation of moderation and good feeling on his own part would be the best decoy to lead him sufficiently far into the net until it would be impossible for him to retreat.

"Good morning, Marrand," said the locksmith to the new comer. "You arrive very opportunely; for unless something is done quickly, those impatient Lyonnaise will be committing some mischievous blunder."

"I expected no less," replied the other. "They have, in truth, most rebellious stomachs, and can scarcely be out of work a week without sending in a *compte rendu* of their grievances, and proclaiming their famous alternative, *to live working, or to die fighting*. While their spirit is a credit to the cause, their impatience is an injury to it."

"But this folly must be prevented," said the locksmith. "Le Manant has sent word by La Bruyère, that we must either help them quickly, or they will try to help themselves; and you may imagine to what a pitch they have worked themselves up, by Le Manant confessing, that beyond a few days he shall have no power to restrain them."

"They *must* be helped, then," replied Marrand.

"But how?" returned the locksmith. "La Bruyère has seen Le Roturier, at Marseilles, who has advanced eight thousand francs, but that will scarcely provide Le Manant's clamorous people with a meal. A million would not be sufficient to pacify them for more than three weeks; and, in the present state of the markets, the want of work is likely to last much longer."

"This is, indeed, a great embarrassment," said Marrand; "and how we are to extricate ourselves from it, I cannot just now imagine!"

"Do you not think that, by good management, the government might be induced to step forward and solve the problem for us?" asked the locksmith; and, rising from the table, he led his collocutor apart.

The locksmith seemed to be very earnestly engaged in explaining some proposition to the other, while the latter listened attentively, with knit brows, as if the project, whatever it was, deserved serious consideration.

"You will see to it, then," said the locksmith, when this conference was ended; "and proceed in the manner I have chalked out?"

"Yes," replied Marrand; "and I see that the scheme may profit us in more ways than one. But you must walk a little way with me, and talk the matter over more at large."

"But my young friend here is a stranger to Paris," said the locksmith, pointing to Adolphe; "and how am I to dispose of him in the interim?"

"Oh, leave him to the care of La Bruyère for a while," answered Marrand; "and they can meet us in an hour at the Place de Grève."

"True," observed the locksmith; "that will do very well. Master Renouard, excuse me for placing you in the hands of my friend La Bruyère for a short time, while I see to some business of pressing importance. We will meet at the place mentioned

by M. Marrand, and at the time appointed. La Bruyère, you will do this kind office for me?" he continued.

"With pleasure, Master Locksmith," replied La Bruyère; "but I will not perform the office so ungraciously as to expose my charge to the rain more than is necessary. So, with your permission, we will remain here until a few minutes of the appointed time, and then march straight to the place of rendezvous."

"Do so," said the locksmith, throwing him a couple of francs; and then looking at him with a peculiar expression, which Adolphe could not understand at the time, but which he well remembered afterwards, concluded—"enjoy yourself, La Bruyère; live while you can, for you may soon be wanted where no such indulgences must be permitted."

"Never mind, Master Locksmith," said La Bruyère, laughing. "If I do enjoy myself when I have nothing better to do, you know that when I am wanted on business, no man can abstain with a better grace than I can."

"I know it well, my good La Bruyère; and now *au revoir*." The locksmith and Marrand then left the room together.

Adolphe had become so suddenly and rapidly involved in such mystery, that it can hardly create surprise that he did not feel himself quite at ease, when left alone with a stranger who was manifestly one of the actors of some undertaking or plot, of the object of which he had no means of judging. La Bruyère, however, did not leave him long to the reflections which only embarrassed him the more, as he vainly endeavoured to reduce them to some rational conclusion. He challenged him to initiate their new acquaintance by pledging it in a glass of brandy; but Adolphe courteously excused himself on the score of its being repugnant to his habits.

"Why, how long have you been in Paris, to retain possession of so much virtue?" said La Bruyère, with affected surprise.

"I only arrived yesterday afternoon," was the answer.

"And how long have you known Master André Jacquot, the most able president of the worthy companionship of *Serruriers?*" pursued the other.

"Only since my arrival in Paris," was again the laconic reply.

"Then, by St. Denis!" exclaimed La Bruyère, "you worked your way into his good graces faster than any man did before."

"I should inform you," said Adolphe, "that I am indebted for Master Jacquot's favourable opinion and kind treatment of me, to an introduction which I had to him from a mutual friend in the country."

"Oh, that explains it all," observed the other. "But may I ask who that mutual friend is, for most of Master Jacquot's personal friends are also equally well known to and known by me."

"It is the schoolmaster of the Commune of Autun, one *Gaspard Ferrete,*" answered Adolphe.

"Gaspard Ferrete! my old crony Gaspard Ferrete!" ejaculated La Bruyère. "Why, we were brother clerks in the same establishment—and, by the by, fellow-sufferers in it too—many years ago. If he had known that I was in Paris, he would not have failed to have made you known to me, as well as to Master Jacquot."

This revelation did much to reassure Adolphe; and thenceforward he was much more communicative, and, it must be added, more inquisitive, too. Amongst other things he inquired of his companion who the stranger was who had left the room with the locksmith; but La Bruyère replied that he did not know, and that this was the reason why he took no part in the conversation between him and Jacquot.

"But," observed Adolphe, "he seemed to recognise you when Master Jacquot alluded to you as the bearer of a message from Lyons!"

"That could be easily accounted for," answered the other;

"and if ever you go with Jacquot to the Rue des Vingt-un, you will learn how."

"I was there with Master Jacquot last night," said Adolphe.

"Indeed!" said La Bruyère. "Then you must have observed that the *Twenty-One* have many communications with their agents, of which those agents can know nothing themselves. I am only a *courier* in the service of the *Twenty-One*, and, as such, may be known to that M. Marrand, though I do not know in what relation he stands to that body himself."

"I can easily comprehend such to be the case," observed Adolphe; "and I suppose that I am also to understand that there are many in the same situation as yourself."

"Many; but how many I cannot tell you. The machinery of the *Twenty-One* for the organization of labour throughout the country is necessarily very extensive and complicated; but I know nothing of it, except that part of which I am, so to say, one of the wheels. But come, our time is up; I will just take another glass to the health of our absent friend, Gaspard Ferrete, and then we must make a movement to our place of meeting."

Saying this he arose, tossed off his glass with a smack, and led the way into the street.

The rain was still falling, and therefore they made the best of their way to their destination. When they arrived at the Place de Grève, the stranger M. Marrand was already there, but not accompanied by André Jacquot.

"Where is Master Jacquot, Monsieur?" inquired La Bruyère.

"You will see him presently," replied the latter; "and in the meantime you and I, M. La Bruyère, can perhaps rake up a few agreeable souvenirs. I think I have seen you more than once before?"

"Where can it have been, then?" said La Bruyère; "for I have no recollection of your face, voice, or figure."

"The first, I believe," replied Marrand, "was at *Toulon*;"

and he fixed a gaze upon La Bruyère from which he shrank in confusion. He rallied himself instantly, and, going up to Marrand, whispered something in his ear.

"No!" was the brief answer of the latter to some question which had been put to him.

"Well—so much the better; but the subject of course need not be mentioned?" the latter words were uttered by La Bruyère in a half-confident and half-hesitating tone.

"Why the less said upon it the better—eh?" said Marrand, with a laugh. "But come; try to recollect whether you never saw me elsewhere. What do you think of the little town of Pouncey? so pleasant a place for a gentleman to retire to, after having discharged those onerous duties which the country had imposed upon him as a reward for his previous exploits, that I wonder how you could ever have thought of leaving it!"

La Bruyère turned pale, as a man who had given himself up for lost.

"But it's ill joking under such a rain as this," continued Marrand; "so I apprehend you at once under this warrant from the prefecture of police."

"What for!" exclaimed the wretched man.

"First," replied the other, "for having escaped from the *surveillance* under which you were placed at Pouncey as a liberated convict; and secondly, for having aided and abetted a conspiracy against the government!"

"Then André Jacquot is a villain—a spy—and a blood-seller!" ejaculated La Bruyère; his rage at the treachery of the locksmith rising above his alarm for himself.

"André Jacquot," coolly observed Marrand, "may be all you describe him to be; but all that I know, or care to know, is that you are Jaques La Bruyère, an escaped convict,—that you are further charged with the respectable crime of treason: so you must be so good as to accompany me to the prefecture, and

I will hear what you have got to say about André Jacquot by the way. And as for *you*, young man (addressing Adolphe), make the best of *your* way to the place where you slept last night, and remain there until you hear further from a person I will send to you, and who will give the counterfoil to this cut card as a token that he does come from me. Turn neither to the right nor the left; for to escape the eyes that are now upon you, or the hands that will be upon you the moment you show the symptoms of eluding them, is impossible."

Adolphe saw the officer of justice walk away with his prisoner, and gazed after them, as long as they remained in view, with a stare of consternation and bewilderment. He could scarcely believe that he was awake, but that the scene he had just witnessed could be no more than a dreadful dream, suggested to his excited fancy by what he had heard and witnessed the evening before. He was soon, however, recalled to a consciousness of the reality of his situation, by the voice of a passer by, who said, without stopping—"*Go where you have been directed.*" He did not wait for a repetition of the warning, but turned round, and, without reply, made toward the Boulevard.

His first thoughts, as he pursued his way to the *cabaret* of his hostess, were not of himself; for conscious that he had committed no crime, it did not strike him that he was in any danger. His thoughts were of André Jacquot, the locksmith. He shuddered, as, to his simple imagination, it appeared as if he had been waylaid, and nearly destroyed, by the foul fiend himself under human guise. The cool malignity and treachery of his seduction, seemed to Adolphe beyond the reach of human villany, and that he was the sport of beings of another world. Then he reverted to the warnings of Annette, and she appeared to himself almost as a pitying angel of light; and his steps quickened as he thought of her, as if he should surely find protection in her presence.

Annette was serving in the bar when he entered the cabaret;

but the expression of Adolphe's countenance so much alarmed her, that she joined him instantly in the club-room.

"My God!" she exclaimed; "what has happened, Master Renouard? Your looks are as haggard as if you had been hunted here by a legion of evil spirits!"

"And so I have been, Annette," he replied.

"Oh, say not so—not at least if they have been *evil thoughts!* Why did you not remember *her*, and they would have fled from you like the vision of a dream!"

"I had no evil thoughts," returned Adolphe; "but I have been beset, and truly hunted here by evil men, Annette!"

"Who, who?" she asked, impatiently.

"I only know one of them; but another will be here presently," he replied.

"And that one is——"

"André Jacquot!"

"Surely, surely not," said Annette, still more distressed; "for I *cannot* believe him so base. He might mislead, but never would betray you!"

"But he *has*," returned Adolphe.

"No, no! I say; on the contrary, I know he would die to save those whom he had endangered. There must be some mistake, some misapprehension, in this matter. Where is André Jacquot now?"

"I do not know," answered Adolphe. "Less than two hours ago, he left me in company with a man who is an escaped convict and a plotter against the State, and he left us, taking an officer of justice with him, whom he had introduced to us in disguise. He made an appointment to meet us in an hour in the Place de Grève; but, instead of keeping the appointment, he allowed the officer, after denouncing us to the Prefecture, to come alone and make a prisoner of his convict friend, while, virtually, I am

myself nothing else in this house; for I am forbidden to leave it until some one from the Prefecture comes to visit me."

"And what was the name of the man whom André has caused to be apprehended?" inquired Annette.

"La Bruyère—Jaques La Bruyère, the officer called him," responded Adolphe.

"Then, I am more and more convinced," said the young girl, firmly, "that this affair is not as you think, and *quite* convinced that no harm will come to you. But, hark! my aunt is calling me. I will be with you again as soon as possible."

CHAPTER IX.

THE hope which Annette had held out, that the strange occurrences of the morning might admit of some better explanation than that the locksmith was "a villain, a spy, a blood-seller," would have more allayed Adolphe's uneasiness, had he not remembered that the person La Bruyère, into whose company he had been entrapped, was, at any rate, a man stained with crime and stamped with infamy. For what good, or even harmless purpose, could he have been seduced into such a suspicious position, and then exposed to the officers of justice as, at least apparently, an associate of the very worst of criminals? "No, no!" he thought within himself; "Annette must deceive me as to the real situation into which I have been betrayed. André Jacquot is evidently one of those sanguinary parasites of justice, who sacrifice innocent blood to it for most horrible lucre. He might well pamper his victim, for doubtless he was sure of his compensation."

In alternate fits—now of vexation at the manner in which he had been ensnared, and now of apprehension for the consequences which might follow—he had passed more than an hour alone, when Annette at last made her appearance, almost breathless from the haste with which she had ascended the stairs, and some "tiptoe" expectation by which she was obviously agitated.

"Master Renouard," she said, "there is a person below who has called with a message for you from the *sous-préfet* of police."

"I am glad," returned Adolphe, "that he has not delayed his visit longer; for it will at least put an end to my suspense. Be so kind as to say that I am quite ready to see him."

"But, can you imagine who it is?" she inquired.

"No," he answered; "unless it is André Jacquot himself; though I hardly think that he would come to triumph in his baseness."

"He has sent word, nevertheless," said Annette, "that he shall be shortly here to dine with you."

"He cannot compel me to submit to that degradation," replied Adolphe; "and I must entreat you to request the messenger from the prefecture to execute his commission in order that I may be spared it."

"But the messenger is to dine with you too," interposed Annette.

"And who is *he?*" asked Adolphe, impatiently.

"No other person," answered Annette, "than your late companion, Jaques La Bruyere!"

She had hardly mentioned the name, when the man himself entered the room, and with mock ceremony, presented Adolphe with the counterfoil of the cut card, which he had received from Monsieur Marrand.

"I hope, Monsieur Renouard," he said, making a profound obeisance, "that you will recognise by this token, that I have high authority to claim the honour of your acquaintance and company."

"Why, this," exclaimed Adolphe, "must be either the most cruel villany or most errant tom-foolery that was ever practised upon an inexperienced and harmless youth. Nevertheless, Monsieur Bruyere, you will make some amends by informing me truly in which of these lights I am to consider it."

"In neither," replied La Bruyère. "You have been made to play a secondary part in a most important, but still by no means dangerous game; so that there has been neither tom-foolery nor villany in it. There has been neither any intention to trifle with you, nor any risk of compromising you—of which you will be fully satisfied in less than half-an-hour."

The facts of La Bruyère being at liberty, and of his being the bearer of the counterfoil from Marrand, satisfied Adolphe at once that there was no further danger, even if there ever had been any; and the sincerity of Bruyère's manner also convinced him that he had not been the butt of any heartless joke.

"Well, Monsieur Bruyere," he said; "I must confess that I have been much perplexed, and no little annoyed; but as we have only all been playing parts in a little drama, for the benefit of some parties whom Monsieur Jacquot wished to serve, I cannot complain—though the *dénouement* of the plot did not seem likely to me to prove a very comic one. And I suppose, Toulon, Pouncey, &c., were only imaginary scenes introduced into this drama!"

"Hem!" replied La Bruyère, "as Monsieur Marrand said, when he touched this delicate subject in the Place de Grève, 'the less said about it the better.' But you will hear more about it anon; and you, Mlle. Annette, see in the mean time that we have something nice for a snug *partie quatre*, as is due to four gentlemen who have this day done the State some service."

"I will do my best, Monsieur," said Annette; "but for Master Renouard, my aunt wishes to speak to you for a moment, below."

Adolphe rose, and accompanied Annette down stairs.

"I could hardly be satisfied, without this proof, that you are perfectly free," she said; "nor without again warning you to be cautious; for Jacquot and his friends are evidently playing a game which may not be played out successfully at last. And now, return. Say, my aunt wished you to change your wet clothes; and I will bring you up some wine."

Adolphe rejoined La Bruyère, who evinced no curiosity about the cause of his absence. The wine was brought up, and after pronouncing his opinion upon it, La Bruyère suddenly burst into a laugh.

"A very merry thought seems to have struck you, Monsieur," said Adolphe.

"A very ridiculous one, at any rate," rejoined the other; "for it has just struck me what a precious stick I must have looked in the Place de Grève, when Monsieur Marrand dropped upon me with his *souvenirs* about Pouncey and Toulon. No man who has gone to sleep dead drunk on the steps of an *auberge*, and found himself, when he awoke next morning, in durance vile, could, I believe, have appeared more ludicrously surprised."

"Then you really supposed that you had been entrapped, as well as I did?" said Adolphe.

"Assuredly I did," replied La Bruyère, "until, on our way to the Prefecture, Monsieur Marrand equally enlightened me as to the true object for which I was wanted, and on which I shall leave André Jacquot to enlighten *you* himself. By St. Denis! André Jacquot is the cleverest fellow I know, who has not graduated at the college of Toulon; and when I consider that he has not even enjoyed the advantages of the preparatory school of La Force, I must admit him to be nothing less than a GENIUS!"

At this interesting point, La Bruyère's eulogy was cut short by the entrance of its object, accompanied by the lately formidable Marrand.

"I hope, Master Renouard, that my absence from the place of appointment has caused you no serious inconvenience?"

"It caused me considerable uneasiness," answered Adolphe, smiling, "until the re-appearance of Monsieur La Bruyère, with a certain token from that gentleman (pointing to Marrand) relieved me of all anxiety. I trust you settled your business, Monsieur Jacquot, to your satisfaction this morning?"

"Quite so," replied the locksmith. "It is surprising how much good can be done in a short time, when all parties have an interest in effecting it: is it not, Monsieur Marrand?"

"Very," answered the latter, with a laugh. "But I must especially give praise to our friend La Bruyère. Nothing could have been done without him."

"Oh! don't mention it," said La Bruyère. "I have my reward. The fright you gave me this morning has been amply compensated by an exemption from all such alarms hereafter. With your pass in my pocket, I shall never turn pale at any *souvenir* of Toulon or Pouncey again. I don't think I shall even blush; for I feel as if the issue of this morning's laudable adventure had almost restored me to the blessedness of a good conscience."

The locksmith and Marrand laughed heartily at La Bruyère's wit against himself; and the former, perceiving that it was not quite intelligible to Adolphe, took upon himself the task of explaining it.

"You remember, my young friend, the conversation between myself and La Bruyère, respecting the threatened outbreak at Lyons. I will not enter now into the reasons why I deprecated it, and saw that it must be prevented at any cost, or by any means. Now, as to the cost of maintaining some twenty thousand men for an indefinite period, this, under the present defective organization of labour, would have been a sheer financial impossibility for the Associated Trades to grapple with. We might have weathered the storm for two or three weeks, but it would have burst upon us at last; and all our resources would have been exhausted in our endeavour—hopeless from the first—to avert the impending mischief."

"I remember this perfectly well," observed Adolphe; "and I admired the patriotism which aimed at averting, by any sacrifice, the impending calamity. I also remember your observing to M. Bruyère, that you had a scheme for effecting your purpose by the agency of the government itself, and without any expense to yourselves at all."

"You are quite correct," continued the locksmith; "and this was the subject of my private conference with M. Marrand at the *gargote*. I developed to him my plan, and, after some consideration, he approved of it. The plan was one, however, which required at once great delicacy and great boldness in its execution, and therefore, although M. Bruyère was indispensable, we thought it better that his part in it should be that of an instrument, and nothing more. And now I must tell you that M. Marrand is a confidential officer of the Prefecture of police, and it does credit to their judgment that they do confide in a gentleman of so much discretion. He, on the other hand, will do me the justice to say, that so high an opinion have I of his good intentions, fair dealing, and discrimination, that I never omit to invite him to the Rue des Vingt-un when any extraordinary measure is to be mooted. I was censured by my colleagues of the *Twenty-One*, at first, for taking what they called so hazardous a step as opening our doors to M. Marrand; but the result has justified the policy of that step. M. Marrand sees nothing in our association for the better organization of labour, at all dangerous to society, or inimical to the government; and it is owing to his influence at the Prefecture that we have met with so little molestation from the police. Now what could I do better, in such a conjuncture as the present: with an insurrection threatened at Lyons, which would have been at once embarrassing to the government, and prejudicial to our own cause—what could I do better, under such circumstances, than consult M. Marrand, and suggest to him such measures as might prevent a catastrophe which all parties were alike interested in averting?"

"In my humble opinion, it was the most judicious course you could possibly adopt," said Adolphe.

"Well, then," continued the locksmith, "the measures I suggested to M. Marrand were, that the information conveyed to me from Lyons, through M. Bruyère, should be immediately commu-

nicated to the minister of police; that my own regret should be expressed that the funds of the Associated Trades were utterly inadequate to appease the passions, by satisfying the wants, of the impatient Lyonnaise; and also my humble opinion, founded upon my knowledge of their reckless disposition while labouring under privations, that nothing could save Lyons from turbulence and bloodshed, but the interposition of the government—not with the arm of force, but with the open hand of charity."

"You seem to me, Monsieur Jacquot," said Adolphe, warmly, "to have acted, in this difficult affair, not only well, but nobly.

"Well, you perceive," proceeded the locksmith, "that the minister of police would require the evidence both of myself and M. Bruyère, as to the nature of the communications forwarded to me from Lyons, for they were verbal, and not written; but, unfortunately, both I and M. Bruyère had been so disgusted by the conduct of the Prefecture of the police towards himself and others of his compatriots, that he would not have gone voluntarily to afford them any useful information for a hatful of gold."

Bruyère burst into a loud laugh (and neither Marrand nor Adolphe could help joining him) at the delicate irony with which the locksmith *paraphrased* the circumstance of his being a run-away convict. After a few jokes on the matter had been exchanged, the locksmith was allowed to go on with his narrative.

"It was this very natural repugnance on the part of M. Bruyère to present himself at the Prefecture, that imposed upon me the disagreeable alternative of *compelling* his attendance; and, therefore, I communicated to M. Marrand the exact position of M. Bruyère, receiving a voluntary assurance that no advantage should be taken of this information to the prejudice of M. Bruyère, after the termination of the affair in hand."

"Then the pleasant *souvenirs* of Pouncey," said La Bruyère to Marrand, "which we raked up this morning at the Place de

Greve—*of Pouncey, that pleasant place for a gentleman to retire to, after having discharged those anxious duties at Toulon which the country had imposed upon him as a reward for his previous exploits*—all these agreeable *souvenirs* (on *your* part at least) were only fudge!"

"*Vive la bagatelle!*" cried Marrand, and another laugh succeeded at the *souvenirs* of the Place de Greve. When it subsided, the locksmith proceeded:—

"You now see, Master Adolphe, "why you were dissociated so uncourteously this morning from your companion, M. Bruyère."

"Yes," interposed Adolphe; "but I do not see why such strict injunctions were imposed upon me to return straight hither, without turning to the right or the left, at my peril; and, moreover, to remain a prisoner here until M. Marrand should send an accredited agent to take me into custody, or relieve me. This is the only part of the plot which strikes me as being a superfluous joke."

"Not at all," replied the locksmith; "for it was the only serious episode in it. The reason why I gave M. Marrand such instructions respecting you, was the apprehension that our proceedings, which you could not understand, might alarm you. I foresaw that you would conclude that I had trepanned you into dangerous company, and betrayed you; and if so, you would naturally resolve to get as fast, and keep as long, out of my way as possible. I was not sure that you would not run away, without stopping, to Autun, and tell Gaspard Ferrete how scurvily I had treated you. And I had a great disinclination to part from you, with these matters unexplained, and I therefore used the authority of M. Marrand to detain you here until I could come and relieve you from the mystification in which I had unavoidably involved you."

"I am quite satisfied, my good friend," said Adolphe. "Proceed."

"There is, in truth, little more to tell," said the locksmith; "but that little will give you much gratification. The minister of police received our communications in perfect good faith, and has acted on the suggestions of M. Marrand and myself, with a liberality beyond our expectations. A government commissioner starts to-day for Lyons—the news has already been transmitted there by telegraph—with full power to engage all the unemployed operatives upon extensive public works, until trade revives. This will effectually prevent the outbreak, the anticipation of which has caused us so much anxiety."

"Truly, this is glorious news," said Adolphe.

"But not the *most* glorious part of it," interposed Bruyère. "*Considering*, as the official phrase goes, the eminent service which Jaques Bruyere, late of Pouncey, has this day done the State, at imminent risk, it is ordered that the said Jaques Bruyère's period of *surveillance* be reduced to one day from this date, under the special care of Louis Marrand."

"And now let the curtain drop upon this drama," said the locksmith; "for here comes our excellent Annette with the dinner."

CHAPTER X.

ADOLPHE fancied that he had never enjoyed a dinner so much in his life. His appetite had revived wonderfully, together with his spirits; and La Bruyère assured him, as they for the first time drank to each other, that a few more such adventures as that of the morning would make him a very passable companion. "If a young man," said he, "wishes to know what life really is, he should study it in Paris. Elsewhere, you meet with only one or two, and those very ordinary specimens; but, in Paris, you may study life as you study zoology in the Jardin des Plantes. You have every variety before you, from the thing that crawls to the thing that flies. However much some people may admire to study the habits of the great and the noble, I am of Pliny's opinion—an old Roman I was pretty well conversant with when young—that *in minimis maxime natura miratur*, which means, that it is in what are considered the meanest and least of her creations, that nature exhibits the greatest of her wonders!"

"I am sorry," said Marrand, "that I must cut short this display of your learning. My engagements positively compel me to be elsewhere; and I will not be a party to your slipping from your *surveillance* a second time, because your pardon will go for nothing, if you do not fulfil the condition of it. You must, therefore, accompany me—comforting yourself, that after to-day, you can edify Master Renouard with your erudition, without molestation."

"I am quite resigned; for I am only *un forçat* for a day,"

replied La Bruyère. "Another glass to our speedy réunion, and then give the word to march."

The libation went round, and the locksmith and Adolphe were left alone.

"Well, in the first place," said the locksmith, "what do you think of the first person I introduced you to—La Bruyère?"

"I think it a great pity," said Adolphe, "that such a man should have reduced himself to such a degraded position by his vices."

"How?" said the locksmith. "I think the correct expression would be, not that he has reduced himself, but that he has been reduced; and, to settle the question *by whom* he has been reduced, we should consider to whom he is indebted for his vices. For my part, I hold, with Louis Blanc, that it is blasphemy against the Deity to pretend that men are born necessarily wicked—that is, with vices of their own; and that it is more consonant with the idea of a true religion, to believe that God has turned his noblest work out of His hands pure and holy. You surely would not contend that the vicious propensities of the demoralized people in Paris were born with them, and in them?"

"That is a double question, Master Jacquot," answered Adolphe, "which I am not competent to argue."

"It is worth the consideration of any rational creature, nevertheless, and therefore of yours," said the locksmith. "Thus: consider the case of an unfortunate being, born amid the filth and poverty of the City: was that *his* fault? No one has taken the pains to impart to him any notion of the distinction between vice and virtue: can that be imputed to *him* as a crime? He has been permitted to grow up amid examples of immorality and impurity: is he to be blamed for the negligence of others? He becomes a man, and hunger suggests to him that he must labour for a living; but no one enables him, by the exercise of his labour, to satisfy his hunger; and then hunger suggests that he

must do something else. He becomes a criminal. Take him, step by step, from the unconsciousness of the cradle to the first conceptions of crime—has not the fault been that of society, and not his own? Has not the neglect of society been the silent cause of his degradation? Has not an overwhelming and unjust fatality constantly pressed upon his will, and restrained every natural inclination towards the path of virtue? In short, are not his vices, instead of being the deeds implanted in him by the Deity, the rank herbage which has been allowed to grow up by the indifference of society itself, as to whether vice or virtue should be propagated? And this is our social system!"

"I grant," said Adolphe, "that too much of this is true, as regards those who can derive no education or moral instruction from their parents. Society has itself to blame, if they grow up in vice, because it takes no trouble to inspire them with virtue. But the same apology cannot be made for those who have received an education, like La Bruyère, which should make the right path clear to them."

"Yes, there are an infinity of cases," returned the locksmith, "in which that cursed individualism, which is the spirit of our social system, affords great apology for degraded intelligence. Take this very man, La Bruyère, as an example. He was well educated, and was early placed in a merchant's office. He had contrived just to live respectably, as it is called—that is, to clothe his back respectably, at the expense of his belly—for some years, when his master failed, and he was thrown upon the wide world with nothing but a very good character and a very little money. It would have been better for him, under our social system, if he had very much money with a very bad character. As it was, he was compelled to struggle against absolute want, until, by great good fortune, as the world called it, for a young man who had no longer a good coat to his back, he was engaged by a *bourgeois* as book-keeper, at the rate of 600 francs per annum, to

be paid quarterly. The question now for him was, how was he to exist over the first quarter? He solicited his *bourgeois* master for a small weekly advance, but this the latter refused, perhaps because he should lose a few sous interest upon the advances required. In this dilemma, hunger suggested, 'Cannot you omit to enter a few small sums received from time to time, and replace them the moment your quarterly salary is paid?' Poor La Bruyère, in the last extremity, adopted this shift, without the slightest intention of dishonesty. He was found out, tried, and convicted of 'breach of trust and embezzlement, under aggravated circumstances;' for he had only starved *for a month* in his situation, when he could endure starvation no longer, and was sent for ten years to the galleys at Toulon."

"That is, indeed, a melancholy tale," said Adolphe.

"But is not the catastrophe of it the worst part of it?" asked the locksmith. "An outcast from society—see what the proscription has made him; because, to live, he cannot be any better than he is; though if he had not been *naturally* good, he might, and would have been, like many thousands of others, infinitely worse. Oh! it makes the heart sick, to contemplate what curses the individualism—the unfeeling selfishness—of our social system inflicts upon the human race! Individualism! What a paradox for a civilized, or even barely rational people, to profess, to imagine, that by every man caring for himself alone, and nothing for society, society can be upheld in happiness and peace!"

"Turning from this melancholy subject," said Adolphe, "I should think that the government must highly appreciate your motives for making the communication to them you did to-day."

"Yes, they will appreciate them, to a certain extent," answered the locksmith; "but not so highly as you seem to imagine. The executive leaders of the people, and the government, as the executive of the *bourgeoisie*, have for some time been observing a

truce, which neither party is just now prepared to break. The former are certainly not yet in a state to attack, and the latter is very far from being confident of its power to defend; and, so far as having prevented a collision, I dare say they thank me from the bottom of their hearts."

"You surprise me," said Adolphe. "I should have thought that, after the signal triumph of the government in 1832, they would have felt no doubt of putting down insurrection at any time."

"The government have no fear of an insurrection like that," returned the locksmith; "because they know that it was necessarily a feeble one. There had been no time, in the brief interval from the former revolution in 1830, for the people to effect any organization, or even to come to any understanding; besides, there was then only one year's amount of grievances to settle, and now there are many, and the government know that the people are proportionably more deeply and more generally discontented."

"But the government must, nevertheless, always have the advantage of organization," said Adolphe.

"They would have," rejoined the locksmith, "if they knew upon whom they could rely; but nearly all the forces which now contribute to the support of the throne, by the manner in which they press to the foot of it from every side, in order to obtain some favour or advantage while it is, apparently, standing firm, would shrink from it the moment it appeared to totter; and it would fall by its own weight."

"Surely," said Adolphe, "there cannot be so much selfishness and disloyalty amongst the statesmen and politicians of France?"

"Pshaw!" returned the locksmith; "these statesmen and politicians have been so accustomed, for the last fifty years, to *accept accomplished facts*, that I don't know what sort of a revolution they would not accept, rather than not have a finger in the hash after other people have prepared it. They wont burn their fingers

in cooking it; but when it is once served up, they will be the first to claim the upper seats at the feast."

"And do you think that the king has himself the same estimate of them?" asked Adolphe.

"If the king has faith in any of them," answered the locksmith, "he is not the man I take him to be; first, because *faith* is not one of his characteristics; and, secondly, he must know that *royalty* is not one of theirs. For a man to have faith, he must be devoid of suspicion; and for men to be loyal, they must have the devotion to stick by a sinking cause; and while the king is the most suspicious man alive, they, of all men, are the men not to run the risk of propping a falling house."

"I should think," said Adolphe, "that he must have the means of pretty well ascertaining the nature of the ground he stands upon."

"And, therefore," rejoined the locksmith, "he will not stand his ground when he feels it shake under him. Besides, his means of information are not so perfect as most persons imagine, and he has himself been made perfectly aware of its insufficiency by experience."

"This is quite contrary to the general impression," said Adolphe.

"But it is perfectly well known," returned the locksmith, "to those who also know how to make use of the fact *when the time comes*. However, I will give you a proof of it. It was well understood in Paris, for a week before Lamarque's funeral, that there would be an insurrection on that day. The government tried all they could to ascertain from what quarter it was to come, but were unable to obtain the slightest clue. And when it did come, and was put down, they were still as much in the dark, and so they are to this day. First, they ascribed it to a *compte rendu*, got up at the residence of a previous minister, *Lafitte;* but this had as much to do with it as you had. Next,

they arrested, on suspicion, Garnier Pagès, Cabet, and Labedoyère, three newly-elected members, who had made their maiden speeches from the opposition side of the Chambers; but they proved to be as innocent of any rebellious disposition as the poor distracted minister, Montalivet himself. Who then could have hatched the treason! Where were the main-springs of the insurrection to be found? Montalivet tried his luck at guessing again, and arrested the Duke de Fitzjames, Chateaubriand, and Hyde de Neuville, because they were staunch advocates of Legitimacy; but he was forced to back out of the accusation as he had from the former ones: so that after going with a search-warrant for the conspiracy through the ranks of the opposition, the Republicans, and the Carlists, he was compelled to sit down and declare it to be impenetrable! This will give you some idea of the boasted organization of the Court for penetrating into the designs of its enemies."

"And how do you account," said Adolphe, "for the Court being kept so effectually in the dark?"

"Why," answered the locksmith, "it is not because Louis is so blind that he cannot see through the hole in the centre of a millstone as well as others. It is simply because people in this country do not show themselves in their real colours—many of the upper classes, indeed, having no real colour of their own to show at all. Most men here choose to have two coats, to wear either as occasion may require—an ingenious expedient they are ignorant of in England, where people only wear one, and are compelled to go to the expense of *turning*, when they are under the necessity of changing sides."

"I hardly understand what you mean," said Adolphe.

"You have heard," quoth the locksmith, "that during the 'hundred days,' when it was doubtful whether the Emperor would return victorious, or the English would take him, and send us back *Louis le Désiré* instead, every man furnished

himself with two cockades, a tricolor and a white one, in order that he might be provided with the fashionable one, whichever the chances of war might decree it to be."

"Oh, now I understand you fully," said Adolphe.

"I scarcely think you do—*fully*," continued the locksmith. "I do not mean to say that we in France, of the present day, merely keep two coats at home (one of the Republican and the other of the Louis Philippe cut), in order that we may accommodate ourselves to the new fashion (when it comes), as well as we can to the old one while it lasts. We have improved upon this device since the 'hundred days.' We make use of both every day, so that it is impossible to say what we are now, or say what we have not been, hereafter. Briefly, French politicians, journalists as well as senators, in political religion resemble that sect of latitudinarian Persians who—for, of the stricter sort, one sect worships the rising, and the other the setting sun—in order to make sure of being right, *worship both*. And why not? Why should delegates and journalists—and, more than all, why should government officials, of whom, small and great, there are some six or seven hundred thousand—stake their fortune upon either of the contingencies singly, the stability of Louis Philippe or the triumph of Republicanism, when they may just as well insure jointly upon them both?"

"And even those," said Adolphe, in surprise, "who eat of the king's bread, are guilty of this shameful double dealing?"

"The king's bread!" rejoined the locksmith, laughing. "'Tis his bread to-day; 'twas another's yesterday; and may be still another's to-morrow. It is *State* bread, and is just as wholesome whoever has the distributing of it. What should the beasts who revel in a fat pasture care about the name of the owner of it? Good night. I leave you with Annette."

CHAPTER XI.

THE locksmith parted from Adolphe with the understanding that he was to call upon him the following morning, with the view of showing him something more of Paris, than the pressing business in which he had been engaged that day had allowed him to do.

The evening was yet young when Adolphe was left alone; and as the excitement he had undergone since the morning was by no means worn out, he did not feel disposed to retire so early to his solitary chamber. It is true, that he was no longer racked by the alarm, suspicion, and indignation, which so violently affected him, while he believed himself to be the dupe and victim of a diabolical plot; but the *dénouement* in which that supposed plot had ended, left him ample materials for curious and anxious speculation, and he could have sat until midnight, ruminating upon the strange revelations which the adventures of the day, and the explanations of the locksmith had disclosed to him.

"I have heard," he thought within himself, "that this gay and mighty city, which seems to be the very Babylon of pleasure and power, is all hollowness beneath; and that the living mass above is only separated by a few yards of earth from an enormous abyss below, into which it might be precipitated at any moment, by the slightest convulsion of nature. And truly this seems no bad type of the state of our Citizen King. To the eye, his throne seems placed upon a rock, but all beneath it is as hollow,

and as full of rottenness, as the catacombs from which and upon which this goodly seat of his regal government has been constructed. And suppose that *he* should sink into the abyss, like those who have preceded him, those who follow him can have no better foundation to build upon. What hope, therefore, of stability and repose for unhappy France? For fifty years, she has been periodically subject to these convulsions, and there seems to be no more prospect of a final one, than of a final eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Well, it is our fate, I suppose, and we must trouble ourselves no more about the dreadful warnings which our past history affords us, than the lazzaroni of Italy do about the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum. At any rate, the subject is quite beyond the grasp of a poor peasant like me, though, thanks to Gaspard Ferrete, I am not so strange to it as I otherwise might have been."

This grateful reflection upon the services of his old schoolmaster gave his thoughts another turn.

"And now I remember, this La Bruyère spoke, at the *gargote*, of Gaspard having been, in former times, his friend and fellow-servant; and still further, as if their acquaintance was still kept up. I do not exactly blame Gaspard for that; because La Bruyère's vices have evidently been the offspring of his misfortunes, and I cannot blame Gaspard for pitying him. But what can have been the cause of Gaspard's own degradation in society? He came amongst us a perfect stranger, and only consented to become our schoolmaster to save himself from starving, and no one ever heard him speak of his previous career. Besides, there is not only his acquaintance with La Bruyère, but his intimacy with the locksmith, to be accounted for. If André Jacquot was simply a locksmith, and nothing more, there would be nothing in it; but the locksmith is evidently a man whose designs are deep and dangerous, whatever else they be for good or for evil, and in one word, patriot or traitor, he is a *conspirator* who has organized

a most extensive and mysterious scheme of correspondence. Is this the secret of the intimacy between him and Gaspard !"

Adolphe felt seriously disturbed by these last reflections; for although he no longer recoiled from the locksmith himself, he would have been, he scarcely knew why, much pained to find that there was any political *fraternity* between the locksmith and his old schoolmaster. The truth is, that André Jacquot had been open and candid with Adolphe as to his opinions and views, and therefore had not offended the ingenuousness of the young man; whereas, if Gaspard Ferrete should prove to be a sympathizer with the locksmith's doctrines and designs, Adolphe felt that Gaspard Ferrete must be pronounced guilty of having imposed upon his simplicity and confidence, by his studious concealment of his own real character.

Adolphe, however, had no time to analyze his motives for hoping that his old schoolmaster might *not* turn out to be one of the locksmith's confederates, for Annette entered the room.

"Well, Monsieur Renouard," she said, half in jest and half in earnest, "I hope that your first day in Paris has proved to you, not only one of adventure, but also one of considerable edification; for I am certain that you have learnt more in four-and-twenty hours than a poor *travailleur* from the provinces might have reasonably expected to learn in as many years."

"But only think, dear Madmoiselle," replied Adolphe, gaily, "of the great start which I had—of the high introduction which I brought with me, being to no less a personage than the most potent president of the powerful companionship of locksmiths"

"True," said Annette; "I doubt whether, if your object was to involve yourself in perilous adventures, and to become initiated in the dangerous mysteries of Paris, an introduction to M. Guizot, or even Louis Philippe himself, would have served your purpose so well, as having André Jacquot for your Mentor. But I have yet to learn that such was your object."

"Undoubtedly not," returned Adolphe. "The height of my ambition was to become a humble *terrassier*, to work hard, save a thousand francs or so—"

"And then go back," interrupted Annette, "and marry your poor Marie? To tell you the truth, Monsieur Adolphe, I think that the sooner you set about accomplishing your original design, the better."

"Well, the day after to-morrow I shall, dear Madmoiselle," said Adolphe.

"Then, to-morrow, you pass with André Jacquot, as you did to-day?" asked Annette, with a disquieted look.

"No, not as I did to-day, I trust," returned Adolphe. "I would not pass another such a day, for a sous less than the thousand francs which are to enable me to leave Paris for ever."

"And *I* trust that to-morrow may pass—that is, *end*—no worse," said Annette.

"Pshaw! Annette; *now* I think that you are too suspicious," returned Adolphe, taking her hand. "You must be satisfied now, that André Jacquot, at least, *means* me no harm; nor can you suppose that he is every day involved in such singular adventures as that to which he unavoidably made me a party to-day."

"Well, I will hope for the best," said Annette, giving up the point. "But tell me, what do you think of your new acquaintance, the agent of the police?"

"By my faith!" replied Adolphe; "but you have set me a riddle now. If you could tell me which has the most influence over him, the humble locksmith, André Jacquot, or the all-powerful head of the police department, then I could tell you what I would think of the agent, as you call him."

"Yes," returned Annette, "I call him '*the agent*,' for I know him to be nothing more, or rather, *nothing less*;" and she

slightly shuddered, as she gave this equivocal description of the object of their conversation.

"And what are the peculiar functions of 'the agent,' as you call him," asked Adolphe, "that you speak of him so solemnly?"

Annette went to the door, and looked outside, apparently to satisfy herself that no one was within ear-shot. She then returned, and taking a seat opposite to Adolphe, bent her head over the table, so as to communicate what she had to say in the lowest audible tone.

"The agent, Monsieur Adolphe, is the most formidable officer in the service of the government; but the very members of the government themselves are subject to his *surveillance*."

"I can account for the existence of such a functionary," remarked Adolphe in the same low tone, "by something which Monsieur Jacquot told me this evening, about the little reliance that could be placed on the loyalty of statesmen, or even of ministers, in France. But how came *you* to be cognizant of the tremendous powers entrusted to this person?"

"It might cost me more than my life, were I to divulge that secret," replied Annette. "Suffice it to say, that the man is what I tell you."

"And is André Jacquot aware of it?" asked Adolphe.

"At times I am inclined to believe that he is," answered Annette, "and yet it is hardly probable; for I know that the *préfet* of the police himself is not."

"But I hardly see how it is possible for this man to watch the motions of ministers of State, whatever surveillance he may exercise over those of private individuals, because I do not see how he could do without betraying to them the nature of his office. Can you explain this?" said Adolphe.

"Yes," replied Annette. "He has a terrible machinery at work night and day, from which nothing but the most consummate caution, like that of André Jacquot, can escape; and men

are not apt to be over cautious, while they are basking in the royal favour."

"To what do you allude," inquired Adolphe, more interested in this mystery than he had been in any which had preceded it.

"There is an office," said Annette, "called the secret office. It has existed, I believe, for a very long time, having been equally convenient to all sorts of government. You must know, that the post-masters throughout the country are authorized to open all letters at discretion, and enjoined to transmit all of an equivocal political character to the secret office. There they are examined, and, after extracts are copied from them, they are resealed, and forwarded to their destination, as if there had been no question about, or tampering with them. These extracts are in the first instance submitted to *the king* and *the agent*, who is the king's sole minister in this matter; and after those have been reserved which affect any members of the government, the remainder are laid before the cabinet, as if the *whole* of the suspicious evidence furnished by the secret office were thus submitted to it."

"Good heavens!" said Adolphe, "what a complication of treachery and treason does the existence of such a system infer!"

"Does it not?" pursued Annette. "And so you will perceive, that it may not unfrequently happen, that while members of the cabinet are, with an ostentation of zeal for the crown, passing judgment on the suspicious correspondence of others, the king and the agent are, in their bosom, secretly passing judgment on *theirs*."

"Then it appears to me," said Adolphe, very seriously, "that André Jacquot's chance of eluding the grasp of the government is a very slight one indeed; for he seems actually to thrust *his* secrets upon this terrible spy."

"If I did not know André Jacquot well," returned Annette,

"my irresistible conclusion would be that, under the mask of a Republican and Communist, he is nothing less than the agent's confidential confederate. But knowing his inmost soul, as I do, such a supposition is out of the question; and that being the case, I can only solve the enigma of their intimacy in one of two ways, and each of these equally improbable."

"Explain, dear Madmoiselle," said Adolphe.

"Why," returned Annette, "I must suppose, either that André has been fascinated into the agent's toils, or the agent into André's."

"In the former case," said Adolphe, solemnly, "woe to André Jacquot, the locksmith; and in the latter, woe to Louis Philippe, the king!"

"Woe, indeed, to many, in either case," responded Annette; "for it is impossible that this underground strife can pass peaceably away. Break out some day, it must; and the first outbreak will only be the beginning of the end!"

"But did you never, Annette," asked Adolphe, "sound your friend, André Jacquot, as to the ground on which he stands with this man? You might thus, at least, have indirectly put him on his guard."

"I *have* done so," she replied. "On one occasion, I went so far as to hint a suspicion as to the real character of the man—I mean his connexion with the *secret office;* for the fact of his being connected with the *police,* was first communicated to me by André himself."

"And what did André say to it?" inquired Adolphe.

"Why, he smiled, as if he felt the most unbounded confidence in his security," returned Annette, "and said—you are a capital girl Annette; and when I want a guardian angel, I will give you the appointment. But at present, I am not even in need of a tutelary saint. Make yourself quite at ease. My friend may be what you suspect, but it will ever be a matter of perfec indiffer-

ence to me; for I take good care that no letter of mine ever finds its way to the secret office. Indeed, I never write a letter at all, except occasionally to Monsieur l'Agent, himself; and even if I were to write treason to him, and he was to attempt to alarm the king with such a spontaneous effusion of what I should call patriotism, his majesty would only laugh at me as a very odd sort of conspirator, and at Monsieur l'Agent as a fool for troubling about me. No, no, Annette; the secret committee will never catch me at my old foible of letter-writing, which I have foresworn ever since just such a little mermaid as you sued me for a breach of an implied contract of marriage, and obtained a villanous amount of compensation too, on the strength of my having written her a love-sick billet, imploring her to accompany '*her* doting André' on the next Sunday to the theatre Français. After this, I never mentioned the subject to him again, for I could see that he was either hopelessly perverse, or resolutely impenetrable."

"After hearing this," observed Adolphe, "I should be inclined to think that, after all, André knows what he is about—for I remarked this morning, that the important messages he received from the South, were mere verbal communications—were it not for one obvious imprudence which I have noticed in him."

"And what is that?" inquired Annette, rather anxiously.

"That he should select such a man as La Bruyère to be the medium of such communications," answered Adolphe.

"La Bruyère," returned Annette, "is a man (André tells me, and he is a good judge of mankind) of approved trustworthiness."

"Yes," retorted Adolphe, "and of a most unquestionable disposition to drunkenness. What rational man could entrust a drunkard with secrets, affecting perhaps his life, however trustworthy he might be when in his sober senses?"

"You do not know La Bruyère yet," said Annette. "The greatest proof of his trustworthiness is derived from that very

disposition of his to drunkenness; for whenever he has any commission to perform for a friend, he can be trusted to abstain, for the sake of that friend, even from that darling vice—and so much does he love it, that if a bottle of brandy could not tempt him to be unmindful of his trust, no amount of money could tempt him to betray it. But it is growing late, and, after a slight supper in the bar, you had better retire to rest."

CHAPTER XII.

In the solitude of his chamber, Adolphe again recapitulated in his thoughts the events of the day; and so rapid had they been in their succession, and so various and striking in their nature, that he could scarcely reconcile himself to the fact, that they had all been compressed into the short space of a few fleeting hours. The quick growth, too, of his confidence with Annette aided this illusion; for instead of regarding her as merely an acquaintance of yesterday, it seemed to him as if he had known her for years. "By my faith!" he silently soliloquized, "I can hardly bring myself to believe that as yet I have not spent eight-and-forty hours in Paris. When I have reviewed a past month at home, it has appeared to me a single blank page; but in reviewing only one day passed in this busy and intriguing place, it appears as if I had a whole volume of crowded matter to come over again. I remember to have heard my old schoolmaster speak of something of this kind, though at the time I could not apprehend the meaning of his philosophy,—that the length of a man's life is to be measured, not by the number of his days, but by the number and importance of the scenes in which he is called upon to take a part. And truly, this one day in Paris seems, in the retrospect, to have been of longer duration than any three hundred and sixty-five previous days of my existence."

Adolphe rose early, in expectation of meeting the locksmith; but André did not make his appearance until near ten o'clock. He did not, however, breakfast alone; for Annette introduced a man, past the middle age, whom she desired him to receive

not only as a friend of André Jacquot, but as the very champion and apostle of the holy order of *Companionship.*

Adolphe soon discovered that the stranger was a man of no ordinary stamp. Grave even to melancholy, while absorbed in his own reflexions, the moment he gave utterance to speech, his cheek flushed, his eye kindled, and in a moment he stood revealed as a veritable enthusiast. Adolphe for some time did not venture to lead him into conversation; but, at the first, attempt, the stranger responded so readily and warmly, that Adolphe saw that his delicacy had been mistimed.

"This order of Companionship, of which Annette informs me, Monsieur, you are so great an ornament," said Adolphe, "seems to me a very noble and Christian institution."

"It was such, young man," replied the stranger, "until the passions of men demoralized and debased it. Presumption, jealousy, and hatred, have crept in, where all should have been charity, concord, and brotherhood; and our holy order of Companionship has, in these later days, been torn by as deadly strifes and unreasonable factions as the political, or even the religious world itself."

"I am both surprised and grieved," said Adolphe, "to hear that it has been reduced to such a sad condition by folly and perverseness."

"Such however is the case—or rather has been," returned the stranger; "for, as the apostle of Companionship, I trust that I have not preached, though I have long written in vain."

The fervour of the stranger greatly interested Adolphe; and he modestly expressed a desire to learn something from him of the mission to which he alluded.

"With great pleasure, my young friend," replied the old man; "not because I like to indulge in the vain-gloriousness of speaking of myself, but because my experience may prove a lesson, and my success an incentive to others."

"I have spoken of the distractions which have for a long time ruptured the sacred bond of universal charity, which ought to have held the different brotherhoods of Companionship together, even as in the days of Solomon, its great founder, himself; and, if ignorant of the fact, you will be surprised to hear that they originated in nothing more than that pride of rank and ambition for precedence, which have caused alike the most serious differences amongst princes, and the most silly squabbles amongst dames of fashion. I think it must have been the father of all mischief himself who first started the question among the Order—'*which craft ought to be considered the most honourable;*' for the mooting of this question has been the cause of all our disorders and divisions. In a short time, it became a point of honour with each craft to assert its superiority over every other, and even for every craftsman to contest, even to blows, for an imaginary precedence over his neighbour of a different calling. Upon this issue, the maker of shoes for men was ever ready to try a bloody arbitrament with the maker of shoes for horses; the carpenter to enter the lists with the mason; the tailor with the hatter—and in short, it may be said of every craft, that its hand was raised against every other craft, and the hand of every other craft against it. Nor was this all; language the most foul and abusive became the universal *patois* of the brotherhoods amongst themselves.

"A sincere son of the order in its original spirit, this, its wretched and disgraceful condition, sorely afflicted me; and I endeavoured to infuse a better feeling among the brotherhoods, by publishing, at considerable expense—having regard to my humble means—a book of remonstrance and exhortation, under the title of '*Du Compagnonage.*' This, however, produced little effect; but my desire to extinguish our disastrous feuds was not damped; and I resolved, if possible, to visit every town in France where there was a lodge of any craft soever, and try

whether the eloquence of the tongue might not prevail where the pen had failed. My project for some time met with little patronage, and I almost began to despair, when I received substantial encouragement from an unexpected quarter. A gentleman called upon me one day with a message from a lady, who is well known in the literary and political world. This was no other than the celebrated *George Sand.* The purport of her message was, that she had read my work 'Du Compagnonages' and, being desirous to make my acquaintance, requested that I would do her the honour of dining with her on the following day. I did so; and had every reason to be gratified with my reception.

"Eight days after, the gentleman paid me another visit, with a letter from George Sand, which, besides expressing the most amiable and noble sentiments in favour of the cause I had espoused, contained a more substantial reward for my services, which she hoped that I would not hurt her feelings by refusing. I accepted the present in the same spirit in which it was offered, and wrote to her a letter of thanks; and, on second thoughts, I wrote to her another, detailing my project of undertaking a mission personally to all the seats of Companionship in France, in order to preach reconciliation and peace to our brethren, and unite them once more in the bonds of charity and concord. My project was approved of by her, and she called together a few gentlemen who sympathized with her sentiments. Amongst them, they subscribed a sufficient sum to enable me to proceed on my crusade against intolerance, jealousy, and discord, and advocate those quiet principles, by personal appeals, which I had already embodied—alas! ineffectually—in my book. The tour which I made was by the way of Avignon, Marseilles, Cette, Beniers, Castres, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Rochfort, Rochelle, Nantes, Tours, and Chartres. These, and many other places, I visited, preaching the true doctrines of Companionship, which are mutual comfort and support, and not reciprocal injury and hate; and I

have just returned to Paris, after having accomplished my mission with greater success than I had even dared to hope for."

"And a truly noble work you have accomplished," said Adolphe, "and well worthy of all the success by which it has been crowned."

At this moment André Jacquot entered the room.

"Ah! and is it indeed you, my excellent friend, *Agricol Perdiguer!*"* exclaimed the locksmith. "I can see by the

* Whatever might have been the purposes which George Sand, and her male confederates, contemplated serving in sending Agricol Perdiguer on his mission, there can be no doubt that he himself undertook and accomplished it with all the single-mindedness of an enthusiast. Few men, moreover, were ever better adapted for such a mission; endowed as he was with all the simplicity and fervor which we identify with the character of an apostle of peace. His style, too, of addressing his rude audiences, was singularly in harmony with that character, as, instead of mere remonstrance or reasoning, he usually called to his aid that sort of fiction which borders close upon the parable. The reader will perhaps not be displeased, if we give him an example of it:—

"One day," said he, "as I was resting under a tree at a little distance from the high road, after a long and forced march towards my destination for the evening, I cast my eyes backward along the line upon which I had been travelling, and saw a *companion* approaching me. Then casting my eyes along the line upon which I was about to continue my journey, I saw a second *companion* coming in the opposite direction. They were about to meet face to face, and both stalked on with a high head and with looks fixed upon each other which indicated no good intentions. At last, when they were only at a short distance from each other, one of them stopped short, threw down the bundle which he was carrying on the end of his stick, threw himself into a fighting attitude, and gave utterance to this astounding demand: 'What trade are you?' The other, having taken an equal fierce attitude, answered: 'A companion of the shoemakers; and what are you?' 'I am,' answered the first, 'a companion of the farriers, in soul and limb, as I am ready to prove to you!' Immediately they advanced upon each other until they were only at arms' length, and then a war of foul language commenced between them. 'Get out of the way, you stinkpot,' says the farrier to the shoemaker. 'Get out of the way yourself, you black scamp,' replied the shoemaker to the farrier; and then, drawing themselves up face to face, they grinned and gnashed their teeth, and poured forth the most atrocious imprecations and the most disgusting insults, upon each other. Having thus exhausted their vocabularies of abuse, they fell to blows. Each armed with a long thick stick, they

sincerity, that Adolphe thought that he could easily account for the influence which he had exercised even over the self-willed and somewhat sceptical workmen of France, for he felt himself carried away by it beyond the power of questioning their rationality. The locksmith, on the contrary, though he seemed to sympathize with the aspirations of the speaker, also seemed to smile, as it were, dubiously, if not sardonically, and hastened to escape from any further displays of Perdiguer's enthusiasm.

"And what is your next step, my worthy friend?" he asked.

"Upon that point, I came expressly here to consult you, André Jacquot," replied Perdiguer. "You must remember that I went forth on my mission, first into the high-ways and by-ways, and did not attempt to commence it in Paris. My task, therefore, is yet incomplete, and still remains to be finished here."

"And in what way do you propose to proceed? You may be assured of my best assistance," said André.

"Of that I am aware," returned Perdiguer; "but I will request nothing more of you than that you would use your influence to have the clubs called together that they may *hear me*. Yes, that they may simply hear me; for I do not believe it possible for them to hear how much that admirable woman George Sand has enabled me to do for their comrades in the provinces, without being penetrated with a sense of the beauty of Charity and Virtue. Yes, my friend, André Jacquot, I know you to entertain a lower estimate of human nature than I do; that you do not believe in the innate greatness of soul of '*les hommes du peuple, mes frères*,' as I do. But trust me, that they have themselves faith in such devotion and virtue as those which are illustrated by the actions of George Sand, even as I have faith in them, and should be unhappy if that faith did not increase with my increasing years."

"Pay your respects then, my dear Perdiguer, to George Sand to-day, and I will arrange the business you speak of to-morrow," said the locksmith. "And now, Master Renouard, I am at your service for a stroll, if you are inclined to accompany me. Worthy Perdiguer, *au revoir !*"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE locksmith and Adolphe merely passed a few observations upon the prospects of the weather, until they emerged into the more open streets which led towards the Boulevard. The previous day had been one of rain and drizzle; but the "Sun of Paris" was this morning asserting his dominion over his chosen territory, and there was genial warmth—not heat—in the atmosphere which almost excuses the propensity of the Parisians for lounging on the Boulevard, or in the Gardens of the Tuileries, before noon.

When they arrived at the Port St. Martin, Adolphe was suddenly checked by the locksmith.

"Come," said the latter, "I am not going to the City this morning. Let us turn to the right. Upon my word, you seem to have a strange nose for the Palais de Justice; but our business this morning is in a more fashionable quarter, and I mean to introduce you to a more respectable official of Mother Church than you would find within the precincts of Notre Dame, all venerable as she undoubtedly is."

"No more mysteries, I hope?" said Adolphe, laughing, as they turned up the Arc de l'Etoile.

"Yes," returned the locksmith, "the greatest mystery of all; I am going to confession; and you are at liberty to see what sort of penance is inflicted for political sins in Paris. What say you?"

A sudden thought struck Adolphe. "Oh!" said he, "I suppose you are going to the *Secret Office* to get absolution from *the agent?*'"

Adolphe expected that this bold manœuvre would throw the locksmith off his guard. He was mistaken.

"Pshaw!" said he; "Gaspard Ferrete is after all an old ass, and only fit for the situation of schoolmaster to the promising youth of his little *commune*. I suppose he has crammed you with awful notions of the said Secret Office and the agent; but if he had been blessed with a more fluent tongue and a less fluent pen, he might have laughed at both—as *I* do. No, no! I am, in verity, going to confess to a priest; and such a mortal sin is the sin of suppression that I shall confess to him every tittle of what you know to have occurred both yesterday and this morning."

"Surely, you must be joking?" said Adolphe, in surprise.

"I *never* joke," replied the locksmith; "everything I do, I do seriously."

They walked for a short time together in silence, which was at last broken by the locksmith.

"Well," said he, "let the confession, and the penance, and the absolution stand over awhile. What did you think of my friend, Agricol Perdiguer?"

"That he is a good man, and that is the highest praise I can award to any man," replied Adolphe, unhesitatingly.

"Yes," observed the locksmith, "he *is* a good man—almost too good for the world, as it is; and the worst of it is, he is not the man to make it materially better."

"What!" said Adolphe, "is it nothing that he has fused, as it were, the discordant materials of your companionships into harmony, and cemented them, as it were, together?"

"Yes," replied the locksmith; "but the man who makes the very best of mortar is not necessarily the architect who can plan and construct the edifice."

"I do not understand how your illustration applies," said Adolphe.

"Listen, then," said the locksmith. "With all my knowledge of

the trades, and all my tact in managing them, I lacked the peculiar something in my composition which was necessary to bind them together. I could unite them together for a time, but I could not *fuse* them: there is not that warmth of enthusiasm in my genius for such a task. Agricol Perdiguer, on the contrary, is just the very man to perform this primary operation; but he is utterly incapable of employing the material, which he has thus prepared to our hands, for the planning or execution of any noble design. You see that I am candid with you; for I dare trust you as I never trusted man before."

"You pay me a large compliment, Monsieur Jacquot," replied Adolphe; "and on my part, I implicitly trust that you will not suffer your unmerited and unsolicited confidence to involve me in any danger which, if left to my own feelings and judgment, I should avoid."

"You *may* place implicit trust in me, to that extent," said the locksmith. "If ever you run into any danger by my side, it shall be with open eyes, and with a convinced judgment and a willing heart."

"That is fair," returned Adolphe; "but please to enlighten me on one point, upon which I am rather curious. If this Agricol Perdiguer is really so mediocre a character as you insinuate, why entrust to him such a prominent part as he has lately been starring in?"

"Have I not told you already?" replied the locksmith. "Simply, because he could perform that part to perfection, though utterly incompetent to fill any higher part in the action of the piece. His simplicity and his enthusiasm, so effective in the first act (if I may say so), would be both ludicrously and mischievously out of place in the succeeding ones. I have a far greater man in my eye, who will some day break down simply from being too abundantly endowed with the same virtues as Agricol Perdiguer. The man I allude to, as infinitely more

capable of awing '*les hommes du peuple, ses frères,*' by his eloquence and self-abandonment than Perdiguer is; and yet, when his day comes, I foresee that he will only rise to fall. Believe me, my young friend, I am as little selfish as I think it possible for a man to be; but I know that single-mindedness, and scrupulous and open honesty, will never make a great reformer in troublous times, and upon this belief I act. No; poor Agricol Perdiguer is too much of an optimist to become the saviour of his country, though he is just the man to be employed as the forerunner in the wilderness, and prepare the way."

"I do not think that your confessor would much applaud you for such an application of Scripture," said Adolphe, somewhat stiffly.

"I beg your pardon, my young friend," returned the locksmith. "The reproof is just; and I feel it more coming from you, than I should from Father Choiseuil himself. It is the worst of indulging in forcible illustrations, that it betrays us, unawares, into gross improprieties, such as I admire you for having noticed."

Adolphe could not but resume his wonted tone, after such an *amende* from a man who was not only so much his senior, but of whose abilities he began to form a very high estimate. He therefore turned the conversation back into its former channel.

"And is Madame George Sand aware that this simple-minded and honest Agricol Perdiguer was, when sent forth on his benevolent mission, only a subordinate employé, to pave the way for the execution of some ulterior and more comprehensive design?"

"Hum!" returned the locksmith. "You do not seem to be aware that there was never a political intrigue in Paris, in which a woman was not either at the *bottom* or the *top* of it. I really believe this has been the case ever since the creation, so natural and inevitable does the system always seem to have been. The only way that we *male* intriguers have a chance of carrying our own point, against this petticoat meddling, is not to let the lady

be at the *bottom* of the intrigue, but to flatter her vanity by letting her figure at the *top* of it; and our friend, George Sand herself, who, no doubt, dreams of revolutionizing the world herself, and restoring the age of the Amazons, was not superior to this weakness of her sex. She believes that Perdiguer is, as you say, the employé, to pave the way for the execution of some ulterior and more comprehensive design, because she has herself such a design, *en petto*, to surprise us with; but she knows no more of what the real design is, than Madame Pompadour."

"I think it very silly, and very unbecoming," observed Adolphe, "in women, to have anything to do with such matters."

"Spoken in good faith, just as it should be by a young man fresh from the simplicity and propriety of the provinces," said the locksmith; "but oh! mention it not in Paris, unless you desire to signalize your *auto-da-fé* as a blasphemer. Why, the women affect to rule here, from the Tuileries down to the Faubourg St. Antoine. It is not the king who decides, but Madame Adelaide, his sister. It is not M. Guizot who makes up his mind on any great question: he consults his mother. The shopkeeper neither buys nor sells; his wife manages the books and the cash-box. The very fish-women of the *Poissonnerie* keep their husbands to catch fish, and manage the rest of the business themselves. It is the same with all. We are the only petticoat-ridden people on the face of the earth; though, as a people, we put a bold face on the matter, and should rebel, if an attempt was made to place a woman on the throne!"

"You certainly treat the paradox in the whimsical way it merits," said Adolphe; "but pardon, if I say that I can hardly imagine how it happens that the mere force of ridicule has not long ago put down such preposterous pretensions on the part of the weaker sex."

"Simply because the weaker sex can wield that said weapon, ridicule, with more effect than the stronger sex," replied the

locksmith. "But then you must observe, all this arises from the effeminacy of our *effete* race of courtiers and politicians, and from the force of example. The madame of the noblesse rules her aristocratic lord by the force of the ridicule of the *salons;* why should not madame of the bourgeoisie do the same? or, why should not the banker or stock-jobber not succumb to the same fashionable tyranny, and so ape his superiors? The same frailty thus fetters, through successive grades of society, down to its very dregs, until, by and by, we shall have to sit at home and mend stockings, while the women take possession of the Chamber of Deputies—perhaps with George Sand for their president; an occurrence which I am sure she deems to be as little improbable as unseemly."

"You said just now," interrupted Adolphe, "that you never joke?"

"Nor am I joking now," replied the locksmith. "Why these petticoat radicals will not even leave the organization of our labour to ourselves. They know a hundred times more about it than we do; and if ever we should bring about the national *ateliers* of Louis Blanc, I have no doubt that George Sand, and Flora Tristan, and a few other ladies of that stamp, would claim to be at the head of the 'hierarchies.' By my faith! I believe that if a revolution was to take place, and some of George Sand's male *protégés* were to tumble uppermost for the moment, the lady would insist on the right of dictating all their State papers, and have the right acknowledged into the bargain."

"You seem yourself to entertain a considerable degree of contempt for these female pretenders to political influence," remarked Adolphe.

"Your discernment on that point," replied the locksmith, "is rather a contradiction to your suspicion that I was joking on the subject. The satirist is no joker. He is the severest of all commentators."

"And do you think that this peculiar phase of Parisian society will ever pass away?" inquired Adolphe.

"Yes," answered the locksmith, "I have seen it passing away already, though only just as one sees the phase of the moon change; not by successive hourly observations, but by marking its altered form at intervals. A stronger spirit is growing over the dream of the men of Paris. They are no longer the light-headed and light-hearted creatures they were even ten years ago. Mere sauntering in the sunshine is no longer their supreme pleasure, and to have nothing to do is no longer the most agreeable occupation of their lives. If they are as talkative as ever, their talk is less about trifles and frivolities than heretofore; if they are as polite as ever, their politeness is growing less vivacious and more sedate. In fact, we are becoming a more thinking people, a change which, while it takes nothing from the propriety of our manners, gives steadiness and determination to our conduct. The unmeaning gallantry which has elevated women out of their proper sphere is dying away, and when good common-sense Republicanism prevails—as sooner or later it most assuredly will in France—we shall hear no more of the George Sands, who figure as female politicians under the last shaking branch of the Bourbons, than we do now of mistresses who ruled the realm when those same Bourbons overshadowed the land, like an upas-tree, in the full and prurient luxuriance of their power. But here we are at the Rue St. Honoré, and not far from my father confessor's retreat."

CHAPTER XIV.

HAVING proceeded some distance up the Rue St. Honoré, the locksmith turned to the right, then again to the left, and stopped at a house, which, though now somewhat dingy and out of repair, had evidently not many years before been the residence of some aristocratic family.

To render, however, the following scene intelligible to the reader, it will be necessary to take a brief review of the condition and prospects of that fallen, though not proscribed, party, which is still distinguished by the name of "Legitimist."

From the first restoration of the Bourbons, the Legitimist—formerly the *émigré*—party had always indulged in the most inordinate, and therefore imprudent pretensions; but no section of it, perhaps, was so fatally bent upon recovering their ascendancy as the church—or, rather, the churchmen, who considered themselves the political representatives of the church. The moderation—we might almost say the justice—and the desire to conclude a chequered life in peace, which, in spite of his many foibles and sensualities, reflected a certain degree of respectability on the character of Louis XVIII., for some years operated as checks on the ambition of the survivors of the old *régime;* but, unfortunately, the certain, and not very distant succession of the Comte d'Artois to the throne, fed them with hope, and kept alive that passion for supremacy which might otherwise have been corrected by a calmer view of their real situation. Amongst the emigrant nobility of France there had always existed two classes—those who emigrated at once, at the first outbreak of the Revolu-

tion, and had sought the means abroad of reconquering their country; and those who, at a later period, had fled reluctantly for the mere safety of their lives, after having given in vain their adhesion to the new order of things. The former had always affected to treat the latter with contempt, and, when the court of the Capets was once more established at the Tuileries, arrogated to themselves a pre-eminent and almost exclusive right to its favours. Louis XVIII. was by no means disposed to admit this claim; but the Comte d'Artois had himself been the chief of the earlier emigrants, and it was obvious, therefore, that when Louis should be gathered to his fathers, and Charles, his brother, reign in his stead, the government would be seized, not merely by the Legitimist party, but, exclusively, by the most violent section of it.

These ultra-legitimists, however—if we may so term them—wanted many requisites for maintaining the power which thus fell into their hands, the chief of which was administrative capacity. The better portion of their lives had been spent in exile, intent only on watching the chances of war, upon which the possibility of their ultimate recal to their country depended; and even those who had employed the opportunities of acquiring some experience in State affairs before the storm of '89 drove them to a foreign shore, had been brought up in a school which more unfitted them for administering the affairs of the new generation which had in the mean time sprung up, than if they had been called from the plough's tail. There were few, however, of these statesmen of the old *régime* left, and therefore the whole class may be included under the category of "Incapables."

They were not, however, without allies who did possess a certain degree and sort of capacity; but, unhappily, it was of that sort which was sure, in the end, to involve them in new troubles, instead of extricating them out of the difficulties which arose from their own incompetence for government. Those allies were the

churchmen of whom we have spoken. These men were capable of conceiving *a policy*, which their patrons were not; but, unfortunately for the cause they intended to promote, the policy they adopted was one which, however successful in darker ages, had been worn out nearly a century and a half.

The maxim of Loyola was—"Let us only obtain the education of the masses, and courts also must soon submit to our instructions;" and it was upon this maxim that the churchmen of the reign of Charles X. fondly imagined that they could consolidate the political power of their party in general, and of their own order in particular. But they forgot that two great revolutions had taken place in the world since the days of Loyola, and even since the days of Louis XVI.—a moral one and an administrative one. The people would no longer endure the sort of education which Loyola and his followers had once been successful in *propagandizing*, which consisted in postponing an unreasoning loyalty to temporal, to a blind obedience to spiritual, authority. Of the two, they had come to regard the latter as the more intolerable exaction; and all the efforts of this revived Jesuitism to subdue and win them, only served to annoy and disgust them. And again, they forgot that they had no longer *courts* to control, but *parliaments*—and parliaments, too, watched over by the Argus eyes of the public press, which was bitterly hostile to their schemes. It was natural, too, that the pariah Legitimists, who were scorned, and kept at a distance by their high caste brethren, should in time amalgamate with the moderate constitutionalists; and it is honourable to their loyalty that they never seem to have taken any more extreme steps. Had not Charles X. been so infatuated as to look upon this partial secession of the younger class of Legitimists with contempt, he might have died a king. Their association with the constitutionalists was a blow, the effects of which he felt only when the hour of struggle came.

Still these moderate Legitimists saw, with pain, the extreme punishment which was visited upon an "anointed head," when the public voice pronounced that Charles X. had ceased to reign; and had a Republic been at once declared, it is not improbable that they would have rallied around his fallen standard. But their legitimist and monarchical scruples were appeased by the hybrid device of a "citizen king (and one, at least, of the legitimate line) surrounded by republican institutions;" and, satisfied with this compromise, they transferred their allegiance to Louis Philippe, in good faith, and full of hope that they had at least saved the cause of Legitimacy from the utter ruin to which the bigotry of Charles and his churchmen had apparently doomed it.

Not so the ultra-legitimists. The Revolution of July had allowed them to escape almost unscathed; for vengeance was only visited on the ostensible heads of the party, and they had proved themselves such *imbeciles*, that it was an advantage to that party to be disencumbered of them. In every other respect, though overthrown, they were unbroken; and the designing churchmen, who had been unable to preserve their power by simple statesmanship, felt every confidence in their ability to regain it by intrigue.

How and when the negotiations first commenced between the ultra-republicans and the ultra-legitimists is uncertain; but they most probably originated in a simultaneous conception, which struck both parties when they found themselves mutually offended by the Revolution ending in developing a "citizen king" as the fruits of it. The ultra-legitimists hated "the citizens"—the ultra-republicans equally hated "the king;" and though they had not a common cause to advocate, they had at least a common object of offence to remove; and it would not be difficult, in a place like Paris, where the conduct of political intrigues is left so much to women, who have an intuitive perception of each other's views, to

bring the leaders of the two parties to an understanding. At any rate, it is certain that such an understanding was brought about; and that, but for the premature explosion and suppression of the Vendean Revolt, the ultra-legitimist and the ultra-republican would have been seen fighting side by side against the "King of the Barricades" at the funeral of General Lamarque in 1832.

We must, of course, wait for more revelations, before we can speak with certainty of the exact nature of this compact between two parties so diametrically opposed to each other in every respect but one—their hostility to the dynasty of Louis Philippe. The most probable conjecture is, that they were each playing their own game; that is, using each other for their own purposes. The ultra-legitimists would, of course, promise the ultra-republicans more liberal institutions under Henry V. than the *perfide* Louis had accorded to them, in the full confidence that, when the whole body of legitimists and constitutionalists were once rallied round the rightful heir to the crown, they might break faith with their *quondam* allies without danger. And the ultra-republicans would of course consent to place Henry V. on the throne, convinced that, when the Bourbon party was thoroughly broken up by this counter-revolution, they could, with still greater ease, unseat him, and establish their favourite Republic as the "only possible government" for France.

To prevent a future digression, we will observe that there was still another party to these plots, and which, though by far the weakest of the three, added vastly to their complicity. This was the Bonapartist party. Standing singly, neither the existing government, nor the legitimist or republican factions, would have had any reason to fear its competition. In the course of thirty years the former material of it—the old soldiers of the empire—had died away, and it had been but slenderly recruited by the passion for military glory which in France will always preserve a certain *prestige* for the name of the greatest of her warriors.

And yet, insignificant as the party was in political consequence—for there were no great principles identified with the memory of Napoleon—insignificant, too, as it was in numerical strength, it was still a source of danger and uneasiness alike to the king and to his Legitimist and Republican enemies. A mere outbreak of the Bonapartists in Paris would, of itself, have easily been suppressed; but then it might be pounced upon as an opportunity for a more formidable *émeute* by the other two disaffected parties, and Louis Philippe would have had all these upon his hands at once. Again, suppose Louis Philippe disposed of, the Bonapartists would have had no chance of seizing and holding the government themselves; but when the ultra-legitimists and ultra-republicans came to settle as to the appropriation of the spoil, much would have depended upon the solution of the dubious question—into which scale would the weight of the Bonapartists be thrown? Hence, this latter party, small as it was, was not only an object of uneasiness to Louis Philippe, but of anxiety to the ultra-royalists and ultra-republicans; and the complicity of which we have spoken arose—namely, that while the ultra-royalists and ultra-republicans were plotting in concert against the king, they were separately plotting with the Bonapartist party against each other.

A few words remain to be said of the different agencies by which these plots and cross-plots were carried on. Although the arrest of the Duc de Fitzjames, Chateaubriand, and Hyde de Neuville, on account of the insurrection of 1832, only resulted in a mortifying disappointment for the king—exposing, as it did, the utter incapacity of his police system, either as a preventive or detective one, still those great champions of *pure* legitimacy deemed it prudent thenceforward to keep in the background, and leave the management of their cause to others, who, if not less obnoxious to suspicion, were less liable to be called upon for a strict account of their movements. In this respect, the churchmen of

their party of course enjoyed peculiar privileges. Under the cloak of their sacred office, they could openly visit men of all parties without question, and no tribunal dared to interrogate them on the subject of their conferences. Hence, they became the centres of communication between all the different factions, which, however hostile to each other on general grounds, had one common bond in their hatred of the king; and through the means of these holy interpreters, Republicans, Bonapartists, and Legitimists carried on a correspondence without ever being seen in contact, or even subjecting themselves to the scrutinizing eyes of the Secret Office. On the side of the Bonapartists also, no man of distinction took a prominent part in favour of the heir of Napoleon; for the emperor, in the height of his power, had been such a veritable *autocrat*, that most of his old marshals and generals entertained a more lively remembrance of his petty egotism than of his vast abilities. The devotees of that party were mostly men who had never risen above the rank of subalterns in the imperial armies—a fact easily accounted for by the peculiar policy which Napoleon always observed in the management of his military force. While he treated his commanding officers—one or two personal favourites, like Duroc, excepted—with laconic austerity, his manner towards the common soldier was always kind, even to familiarity. This certainly did not arise from any innate tenderness of disposition, for no man was ever more indifferent to the sufferings, or more prodigal of the lives, of his soldiers. It was, as we have said, his peculiar policy which, by thus centering the affections of the common soldiers in himself, protected him against the *pretorian* danger of military rivals.

We will now resume the thread of our story.

CHAPTER XV.

THE Locksmith gave two gentle raps at the door. A tall old gentleman opened it, whose appearance struck Adolphe as something remarkable. Excessively clean and neat in his dress, there was something about him of a rather antediluvian character; that is, speaking of the revolutionary deluge which had swept away his class in 1789. He was dressed in a black coat, the waist of which descended below his hips; a waistcoat of faded figured silk, which came down to his groin; very tight nankeen pantaloons, which showed the perfect symmetry of his figure; open silk stockings and most exquisite Parisian pumps. To his shirt, there was some extravagance of collar, which was embraced by a most enormous thick padded cravat. The latter characteristic of the old French gentleman's dress might have suggested to Adolphe the natural terror which a Frenchman has of the guillotine.

"*Quisque? Quis?*" said this gentlemanly old porter.

"*Domine fac salvum,*" returned the locksmith, in excellent Latin.

"*Introitus,*" replied the other, making a bow which would have graced the court of Louis Le Grand in the days of Madame Maintenon.

"Is *Le Père* up stairs?" said the locksmith.

"*Oui;* but who is this?" said the old gentleman, pointing to Adolphe.

"Who were you educated by, Master Renouard?" almost sardonically said the locksmith to Adolphe.

"By Gaspard Ferrete, the schoolmaster, of the little commune of Autun," replied Adolphe.

"*Très-bien*," said the aristocratic porter. "Gaspard Ferrete is a most excellent man. Young man, you have been fortunate in having had so excellent a preceptor. Gaspard Ferrete is an unfortunate, but most virtuous person."

"I am happy," said Adolphe, with all the frankness of youth, "to hear you say so."

"Adolphe, my young friend," interposed the locksmith. "I have pledged the honour of an *ouvrier* and a republican that would keep no secret from you. This gentleman is the Marquis Le Beaume. Marquis, know each other. *He* will not deceive you—as true as that *I* shall not."

"André Jacquot," said the old man, with dignity, "you have said enough. Monsieur Adolphe Renouard, I am happy to have made your acquaintance."

"And now the cabinet, before I see *Père Choiseuil* ?" said the locksmith, in an interrogatory tone.

"By all means," returned the marquis, and he led the way into a small ante-room at the back of the hall.

"What is it you want to say, André ?" he asked.

"Nothing more, Marquis," replied the locksmith, "than that the pupil of Gaspard Ferrete shall not, under my guidance, be led into any danger blindfold."

"Certainly not," observed the marquis.

"But *you* know, Marquis," continued the locksmith, "the secret of my influence—that it consists in simply telling the truth. Perhaps I don't at all times do so at first—for if I did people would scarcely believe me; but I take care to convince them in a day or two. Now, convince this youth that I am a honest man."

"I am sure that you are," said the marquis.

"But will you *prove* it ?" asked the locksmith.

"What sort of a proof *can* I give?" returned the marquis.

"Ay—you are at a loss for the proof," quoth the locksmith, with a smile. "Will you allow me to furnish it?"

"André Jacquot!" exclaimed the marquis, "not for the world—not even to bring my sainted wife back again from the grave."

The locksmith burst into a loud laugh.

"What an idea!" he said. "It is not at all necessary that our young friend should know your secret for the present, though, by my faith, I cannot answer that your saucy countess of a daughter has not told him of it."

"Jacquot, you cannot mean what you say," said the marquis, in a tone of absolute consternation; and Adolphe, too, looked at the locksmith with surprise.

"I *always* mean what I say, marquis," returned the locksmith. "And you, my young friend (turning to Adolphe) shall be doubly and trebly assured of that fact at least. When we came into this cabinet (turning to the marquis) I said that we would have no secrets from this young man?"

"Well, but surely he does not know *La Comtesse?*" said the marquis, with much anxiety.

"Indeed he *does*," returned the locksmith, briefly.

"I cannot allow this gross imposition, or folly, to be carried on any longer," interposed Adolphe; "for I have never spoken to a countess, nor, to the best of my belief, have I ever seen one in my life."

"You are quite sure of that, my friend?" said the locksmith, quietly.

"At least, *I* say what I mean!" retorted Adolphe, indignantly.

"And so do I," said the locksmith; "and not only mean what I say, but also what I imply. I say, that you do know a Comtesse Beaume; that she has fed you, cooked for you, made

your bed for you; and, moreover, given you the best advice in the world, which is to love your Marie, and avoid André Jacquot and his schemes. Is it not so?"

For a few moments, Adolphe could hardly gather his wits together, so much was he confused by this extraordinary appeal. And, as soon as he could collect himself, he could only stammer out—

"And!"

"*And!*" said the locksmith. "But it is quite excusable, marquis; my young friend has not been in Paris eight-and-forty hours, and has, therefore, some rustic apology for not knowing the difference between a countess and a barmaid."

The eyes of the old marquis sparkled with delight. "André," said he, "I comprehend you now."

But Adolphe did not, and said, "Monsieur Jacquot, all this may be fun to you, as it was yesterday when you made me believe that I was under the *surveillance* of the prefect of police; but these practical jokes are very unpleasant to me."

"My dear boy," replied the locksmith, "I am not joking. Am I, marquis?"

"Not at all," responded the marquis.

"Then what am I to understand by all this?" asked Adolphe, impatiently.

"Will your curiosity keep for an hour?" said the locksmith.

"Why, it must," returned Adolphe; "unless you will consent to clear up this new mystification at once. But this I declare, on my honour, that, with the exception of the barmaid at your auberge, I have not spoken to a woman ——"

"Since you left your Marie at Autun," slyly popped in the locksmith.

"Better and better," exclaimed the old marquis, clapping his hands together.

"Well then, out with it at once," said the locksmith to the marquis.

"Oh! it's a capital vaudeville," quoth the gallant old gentleman. "I remember something like it when I was in England."

"The devil you did!" said the locksmith. "What was it? None of your old pranks with Louis Philippe, at Twickenham, I hope?"

"Oh no!" replied the marquis; "I was at Holyrood with *Louis le Désiré* there, and we went to the theatre *incog.*, to see a famous comedy, written by the celebrated Tony Lumpkin, the great author of the 'Deserted Village.' I think it begins, 'Sweet Autun, loveliest village of plain."

"You are right, Marquis—almost to a *T*—for in this case it happens to be sweet *Auburne*, instead of *Auturne*," said the locksmith; "and instead of Tony Lumpkin the author of the play must have been one Oliver Goldsmith. What was the name of the play?"

"'*She stoops to Conquer*,'" answered the marquis.

"Well, between us, we have hit the point at last," quoth the locksmith.

At this point of the conversation, a bell was rung, and the marquis begged to be excused for a minute.

In less time than his politeness had exacted from his visitors, the marquis returned, and, with the old fashioned courtesy, introduced to Adolphe, Colonel Mercier, in full regimentals, and decked out with the cross of the Legion of Honour.

Colonel Mercier struck Adolphe as the most handsome and manly man he had ever seen. Though still young, the shade of bronze upon his countenance showed that he had seen some African service; and still there was something pensive, almost tenderness, in its expression, which at the first sight convinced you that he was a kind and good man, although the *étiquette*

of his profession compelled him to be outwardly something of the martinet. Much to Adolphe's surprise, the colonel at once took him by the hand, and expressed his gratification in having had so early an opportunity of becoming known to him.

"I have heard of Colonel Mercier's fame," said Adolphe, modestly; "but how Colonel Mercier could have heard of me, I cannot divine."

"My dear sir, do not suppose that I am a recruiting officer, and wish to enlist you in my melancholy trade; for, as times go, I hate it myself," returned the colonel. "Still, sir, I know you—know you well—and have reasons highly to esteem you. Your honest love for your Marie has won that from me which no force—whether of monarch or mob—could do."

Adolphe was now more confused than ever. What could the serious and evidently high-principled Colonel Mercier know about his Marie?

"I had often heard," said Adolphe, "that Paris is the most wonderful place in the world for strange adventures; but, by my faith! I find it to be a region of actual enchantment."

"How so?" asked the colonel, with a smile.

"Why, here am I, a poor simple peasant," replied Adolphe, "whose only ambition in coming to Paris was to be accepted as a terrassier, at thirty or forty sous a day, and before I have been eight-and-forty hours in the place, I find myself welcomed by countesses, marquises, and colonels, decorated with grand crosses. Is it not enough to make me suspect that it is all either a dream or delusion?"

"Alas! my young friend," returned the colonel, "life, with most men in Paris, has been a dream, or a succession of dreams, for more than fifty years; because society, during that long period, has been subjected to a succession of shocks which have reversed each pre-existing order of things. Reflect, for instance, upon the history of our friend, the marquis, here. At the commencement

of his career, he was the gayest of the gay amongst the most powerful aristocracy in Europe; but this dream did not last long; for one night he was awoke by a most horrible uproar, and the next day found himself a proscribed fugitive, and a penniless exile. Who would have thought that the gallant marquis, the master of a dozen extensive domains, would ever be reduced to the hard necessity of applying to a proud, vulgar English bourgeois for the *honour* of instructing his awkward girls in French?"

"It is too true!" sighed the marquis.

"Well," continued the colonel, "in this situation began the marquis's second 'dream of life,' in which he was haunted by a gigantic figure, which precluded all hope of his ever awaking again to his former state of felicity. But this gigantic figure—the genius of Napoleon—which had seemed to overshadow the earth for a season, itself passed away, and the marquis once more awoke in his own splendid hotel, to enjoy another brief dream of court favour and luxury. It lasted but a few months: the gigantic figure once more appeared, and he again became what he had been only a few months before—a poor emigrant among the bourgeoisie of England!"

"But the dream this time only lasted for a *hundred days!*" observed the marquis.

"True," replied the colonel; "but did not the terrible suspense make those hundred days appear a hundred years?"

"Yes," said the marquis, "those few months of my last exile appeared a far longer term of wretchedness and distress than the many years of my first, because, during the latter and longer period, there appeared to be no hope, and I accepted my fate as *accompli.*"

"After the hundred days came the second restoration, and with it another day-dream for the marquis; but even this was not to be the last. Even now, he dreams that his legitimate sovereign no longer sits upon the throne, and that he sees the day breaking

when the object of his engrossing loyalty will be restored to it. Do not, therefore, startle at anything that appears like a dream, for, however strange it may appear, it is everywhere no more than one of the incidents of our destiny, and in Paris, more than anywhere, truth will be found stranger than fiction.

"It was my destiny, then, I suppose," said Adolphe, "to which I am indebted for this introduction to the Marquis Le Beaume."

"Do you think it a strange freak of the Fates," said the locksmith, significantly, "that the Marquis Le Beaume should receive a peasant youth in his mansion with the courtesy of a nobleman, that his daughter, the countess, should be reduced to the degradation of attending, in a menial capacity, upon the same peasant youth at an humble auberge?"

"Annette is then—"

"My affianced bride," interrupted Colonel Mercier.

"And my daughter," added the marquis.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE meeting of the various parties, who figured in the last chapter, at the house of Father Choiseuil—or rather at the house of the Marquis Le Beaume, for it was his, although the reverend father was at present the ostensible occupant—was not an accidental one. On the contrary, it was held by appointment for the purpose of conferring on some important matters connected with the present state of parties and public affairs.

At the moment when Adolphe learned, from the revelations of the marquis and Colonel Mercier, the real rank and character of his friend Annette, and before he could make any reflections upon the mysterious complications in which she must be involved to be under the necessity of adopting such a refuge as an auberge, and such a disguise as the character of its barmaid, another person entered the room to announce that Father Choiseuil was ready to receive any visitor who might have called upon him by invitation.

The marquis immediately led the way; Adolphe doubted whether he was to follow, but the locksmith beckoned him to do so, up a broad flight of stairs to the more spacious apartments above. Passing along a corridor which faced the principal entrance and staircase, the marquis at last stopped, and rapped gently five times against a door on the right.

A voice within pronounced "*Introitus*," and the marquis opened the door, and ushered his companions into the apartment.

Opposite to the door, an aged gentleman, dressed in clerical fashion, sat at a small square table, the farther side of which he



THE MEETING AT FATHER CHOISEUIL'S.

occupied himself, while, at each of the other three sides, a chair was placed, as if in readiness for the same number of visitors. The usual salutations having passed, Father Choiseuil, turning to the marquis, and at the time pointing out Adolphe, said—

"Marquis, there is one more visitor here than I expected to have the pleasure of receiving."

The locksmith, without ceremony, stepped forward, and, preventing the marquis, took upon himself the office of replying.

"Father," said he, "this young man has been, within the last few days, sent up to me from the provinces by a person you well know and esteem; in fact, he has been a pupil of Gaspard Ferrete, and it immediately struck me that his presence would render our conference much more complete than it would otherwise have been."

"How so, my son?" asked the priest.

"The basis of this conference, as I understand it," replied the locksmith, "is this: not that we are all of the same opinion as to what would be the best form of government for the country; but that we are all agreed that the present form of government, being, in fact, only a bourgeoisie aristocracy, under the guise of a monarchy, resting on republican institutions, is the worst possible for it, and that, therefore, any other practicable form of government would be preferable to it."

"So far, you speak quite correctly," said Father Choiseuil.

"Yes, we have agreed," continued the locksmith, "that it is neither just to the church, nor just to the army, nor just to the *real* aristocracy,—all of which classes are denied the consideration which is fairly due to them."

"There is another point of agreement," said the father, smiling, "which you seem to have generously forgotten; namely, that this now dominant bourgeoisie faction is most oppressive upon the working classes, who have been the instruments by which all their wealth and power have been acquired."

"If I did forget it, reverend father," replied the locksmith, "it was only because, for a moment, I could not help recollecting that there is another class of labourers in France, who had not produced less *for*, and suffered far more from, this all devouring faction, than even the skilled and unskilled operatives of our town: I speak of the peasant proprietors of France, who have been bled by these leeches, at every pore, for generations. This young man is one of these hard toiling and impoverished peasant proprietors: he has been compelled to abandon his native place, and seek any precarious drudgery in Paris, because the exactions of the *bourgeois* mortgagee have disabled his father from any longer keeping him at home; and now I ask you, whether he is not a proper representative of a class, equally suffering, under the present system, as either of ours?"

"You are right, André Jacquot," replied the priest; "and I only wished to hear your reasons for introducing the young gentleman to our conference, because you have always politic reasons to give, which afford us instruction."

Father Choiseuil left the room, and returned bearing a seat for Adolphe, and the party then ranged themselves around the table.

"As president, Master Jacquot," said the father, "I must first call upon you to disclose the main point which *your* party—the *ouvriers*—insist upon, in the modelling of a new constitution."

"The Right of Labour, and fair remuneration for that labour," replied the locksmith.

"And what is the principle upon which you contend for this? asked the priest.

"Upon the principle," answered the locksmith, "that every one has a right to live on the soil which gave him birth, without being compelled to procure a living by violating the laws, and thus subjecting himself to punishment for asserting his right to live in the only way which the disorganization of society, in

thousands of instances, enables him to satisfy the cravings of hunger."

"I admit the principle to the fullest extent," said Father Choiseuil; "for it was one of the great principles upon which our church was founded; and it was not until the church was swept away by the revolutionary storm of 1789, that the unemployed poor found themselves without a claim to sustenance, or ever had that claim disallowed. Indeed, the church, if its wealth was vast, held it, in part, only as trustees for the poor; and the Catholic *Church* in France supplied the wants of the destitute poor, just as the Protestant *State* does in England. We agree then, upon the fundamental principle—that no man should be allowed to starve; and the particular mode in which provision shall be made for carrying out that principle may be well left for discussion, when our main object is accomplished—that of displacing the present government."

"What you mean, is this, father," said the locksmith: "that we had better adjourn till then, the consideration, whether the Church or the State are to undertake the executive in this matter?"

"Precisely so," said the priest.

"Then I am quite content; and are you content also?" said the locksmith, turning to Colonel Le Mercier and the marquis.

The latter persons replied in the affirmative, and Father Choiseuil produced a paper, headed "Resolution agreed to at 34, Rue —— on the —— of —— 184— by the undersigned." The priest then wrote down the resolution thus agreed to, signed it, and handed it to the other parties for the same purpose.

The locksmith, however, proposed that the resolutions of the conference should not only be signed separately, but each in quadruplicate, so that all parties considered should have originals.

The priest for some time demurred to this reasonable proposi-

tion; but, as it was supported both by Colonel Mercier and the marquis, he was compelled to give way.

"And now, marquis, I must, in turn, request you to specify the main point upon which you insist, on the part of your order, in the constitution which we are about jointly to pledge ourselves to endeavour to substitute for the present."

The old nobleman, in a tone of gravity, and at times almost of melancholy, delivered himself as follows:—

"*Mes frères*," said he, "you may easily suppose that, at a time of life like mine—nearly three score years and ten—I am not desirous of any violent innovations, and as little am I anxious for any violent reactions. If, therefore, I should withhold my assent from any startling novelty, so neither would I seek the revival of any thing that is obsolete. I do not ask, therefore, on the part of the *noblesse* of France, that you should re-enact those antiquated privileges which they enjoyed under the old *régime*. Their feudal and seigneurial rights, their monopoly of court patronage, their sinecures, their investiture with the venality of State offices, their exclusive enjoyment of all the commissions in the army, and, in fact, of every honourable and lucrative place in the service under the Crown—all these privileges have been proved, by history, to have outlived their age more than fifty years ago. To ask, therefore, for their restoration at the present day, would be as insane as to expect that Louis XVI. himself could be restored to the throne."

The venerable nobleman paused, and placed his hand to his forehead, as if a painful recollection had shot through his brain.

"All I ask, therefore," he continued, "is, that we be restored to the *statu quo* of the Restoration—in short, that the hereditary Chamber of Peers be re-established."

"Your moderation does you honour, marquis," said the locksmith, with evident sincerity.

"Setting aside the wisdom of each party being moderate for

its own sake, how, except by mutual moderation, can we become so united, and co-operate so loyally, as to ensure the success of our great undertaking?"

"I sincerely concur in these sentiments," said the priest, "and think the demand of the noble marquis a most reasonable one."

"And so do I," said the colonel, briefly.

"For my part," said the locksmith, "I accept the proposal of a hereditary House of Peers, if the country should also accept it; for it would be madness in us to suppose that we can force any thing—whether the marquis's proposal or mine,—down its throat."

"You consent, then," asked the priest, eagerly, evidently unprepared for such a concession from the locksmith, "to our proposing a hereditary House of Peers in place of the present one?"

"I do," replied Jacquot, "with the reserve I have named; and I not only consent to, but advocate it on principle; for if we are to have peers at all, it is far better to have such as are so by their own hereditary right, than such as are only elected by the crown for life. Such a House of Peers as we have at present, affords the crown the means of corruption in the first place, and a double *veto* upon the voice of the people's House of Representatives, in the second."

The marquis's proposal was then adopted, and attested with the same formalities as the locksmith's.

"Colonel Mercier," said Father Choiseuil, "it is now your turn to declare, on the part of the army, the main point upon which you should desire a change in the constitution and working of the government."

"You must be aware, reverend father," replied the colonel, "that I have not the same authority to speak for my comrades in arms, as either of *you* have for the class. I can only speak me own opinions and sentiments; but in those opinions and senti-

ments, I know that the great majority of the army concurs, from the highest officer to the lowest soldier. The prevailing sentiment amongst us is, that we ought to be spared the cruel and disgusting necessity of so often coming into conflict with our fellow-citizens; and, in accordance with this sentiment, the general opinion is, that some change in the policy of the government should be made, which would relieve us from this necessity. But what that change should be, we have no wish to dictate. All we require is, a government which we can serve *loyally;* and how can we serve *any* government, be its form what it may, with *true* loyalty, which imposes upon us services which are revolting to our consciences? As a military man, therefore, I have no precise stipulation to exact, as to any particular feature in the constitution of the government, except this—that it shall relieve us from the unpleasant task of putting down such frequent insurrections, by removing the causes of them."

"Spoken like a true citizen soldier," exclaimed the locksmith.

"And spoken like a Christian soldier, too," added the priest.

"And for my part," said the marquis, "I must declare that the most Christian citizen that ever lived, would not condemn the profession of a soldier, if the soldier was always animated by such sentiments as Colonel Mercier."

"And now," observed Father Choiseuil, "it only remains for me to speak on behalf of the church. I cannot say for it, as the marquis has said of his order, that churchmen would not be pleased to see much restored to the church which was taken—and *we* think, with as little policy as justice—in 1789. But we see the impossibility of this being done, without a conflict, of opinions at least, which would throw the whole country into disorder, and we would not be responsible for such a result at any price. If the new government, when once settled, think that it can extend the usefulness of the church, by increasing the number or means of the clergy, well; but no concession we require

in return for the exercise of our influence in restoring to the country the blessings of a satisfactory government. We stipulate for only one thing—*toleration!* Gentlemen, are you all content?'

The marquis, the colonel, and the locksmith expressed themselves perfectly satisfied.

"Our business then, for the present, is concluded," observed the priest; "but before you depart, M. Jacquot, let me ask you if you have seen M. Boisson?"

"He only returned from St. Etienne last night," replied the locksmith; "but he has already sent me word to meet him at two hours past noon to-day. Come, Master Renouard, we must say *au revoir* to these gentlemen, or I shall not be able to do so, for I have a little to attend to previously."

CHAPTER XVII.

In the simplicity of his heart, Adolphe was impressed, from all that he had heard, that the four persons who had constituted the conference to which he had just been a witness, were actuated by only one common object—the good of their country—and that they all had spoken with perfect sincerity and openness. There was only one among them, however, who was really entitled to so much credit; and that was Colonel Mercier. Even the venerable marquis had, though almost unconsciously perhaps, in some measure played the hypocrite. He was quite sincere in saying that he did not desire the restoration of the ancient privileges of the clergy; but he did not confess the latent conviction in his mind, which caused him to abandon that idea so peremptorily—namely, his knowledge that no Bourbon would consent to make such an attempt in their behalf. The priest, too, was quite sincere in saying that the church had no eye to the restoration of its temporalities; but he was guilty of a very material suppression when he said that the only stipulation it required was *toleration.* If the churchmen, whom he represented at the conference, despaired of gaining for the *church* the rich endowments of which it had been despoiled by the Revolution of 1789, they were plotting to regain for themselves, what they were carnal enough, in spite of their spiritual character, to value more highly —namely, the political influence they had lost by the Revolution of 1830.

As for the locksmith, the reader, though he may give him

credit for saying what he meant, will not suspect him of not meaning more than he said.

Adolphe, however, had not learned sufficient of the factions of Paris to penetrate into these things; and therefore he unreservedly expressed to the locksmith the gratification he felt in finding that, although there was a conspiracy on foot, all parties concerned in it were actuated by the pure motive of serving their country.

"Perhaps you will alter your opinion, when you know more," said the locksmith, drily.

"How so?" exclaimed Adolphe, perfectly thrown aback; so favourable had been the impression produced upon him at the house of the marquis.

"First," replied the locksmith, "because you do not know all the parties who are either directly committed to this conspiracy, or who are coquetting with it."

"Then there are others plotting against the government, to whose honour you would not so implicitly trust yourself as to that of the gentlemen I was introduced to this morning?" said Adolphe, by way of interrogatory.

"I trust myself to the honour of *no man* in matters like these," responded the locksmith, with emphasis. "What I trust to is their *own interest*. My head, while it is on my shoulders, is more useful to the gentlemen we have just left, than it would be to Louis Philippe himself, if it were off. But a truce to these matters of State for the present, and let us talk a little of domestic affairs. What do you think of the discovery you have made this morning about the little barmaid of the auberge?"

"Why, at the moment," replied Adolphe, laughing, "it made me think that Paris must, indeed, be an enchanted city, the great wizard of which, André Jacquot, had the power of transforming all who entered into whatever shape his caprice might prompt, and even render them unconscious of any previous state

of existence they had enjoyed. It is possible, I said to myself, that even I am not in reality Adolphe Renouard, the son of an impoverished peasant proprietor in the Commune of Autun—that I have not, in fact, come to Paris to seek employment as a humble and hard-working *terrassier*—but that my true condition may be that of a Turkish ambassador, who is come to France to arrange some weighty question on eastern affairs, and that this cunning wizard, to defeat the object of my journey, has transformed me into a poor farmer's son, and my credentials to the Court into a few silly *billets-doux* from a peasant girl."

The locksmith laughed heartily at this lively sally.

"Go on," he said; "did you think nothing more in this odd strain?"

"Oh, yes," replied Adolphe. "I next said to myself—if there is no sorcery in the matter, at any rate it seems the fashion at present for every one in Paris to be playing a part in a political masquerade; and that, for all I can tell, this André Jacquot himself may not be the president of the worthy companionship of locksmiths, but no other person than the formidable préfet of police!"

Adolphe did not say this altogether at random, and without meaning; for after the disclosures which had been made that morning, the *possibility*—nothing more—of the locksmith playing an assumed character for secret purposes, had more than once flitted across him. He had, however, no sooner made the remark, than he wished that he had not given utterance to it, and anxiously waited to see how the locksmith would take it.

"By my faith!" said the latter, with a chuckle, "your appreciation of character, considering your years, is remarkable; for although I am not the préfet of police, as the lawyers say, *in esse*, I certainly am *in posse*—that is, if I am not now, I may be very soon. For the present, I am poor André Jacquot, the locksmith, and nothing more."

"I comprehend you, my friend," returned Adolphe, "and wish you success; and I feel confident that your capacity for the situation will prove equal to your ambition."

"I thank you," said the locksmith, bowing. "I have no doubt that I shall make a very decent head of the police—almost equal to old black Savary himself—with such a Vidocq as the present agent to assist me. But I am sure," he continued, "that you have not yet told me what, at the moment of the disclosure of her real rank, you thought of our barmaid of the auberge?"

"To tell you the truth," replied Adolphe, "for some time I could not at all comprehend how Annette *could* be the daughter of the Marquis Le Beaume, and the affianced bride of Colonel Mercier; for I am sure that she is all truth, and there are two things which I had from her own lips which contradict the supposition."

"What are they?" said the locksmith; "perhaps we can reconcile them with what you have heard from Colonel Mercier."

"There is one which I am not at liberty to mention," returned Adolphe.

"What is it?" asked the locksmith. "If it relates to any love affair of Annette's, Colonel Mercier has himself absolved you from any obligation to secrecy; and as to any thing she may, in confidence, have said to you favourable to me, I absolve you from secrecy also."

"I hardly know what to do," said Adolphe, in much perplexity. "But first tell me this—is not our hostess Annette's aunt?"

"Her *adopted* aunt—nothing more," replied the locksmith. "But to save time, I will unravel the whole complication for you.

"The Marquis Le Beaume and I have long been acquainted—in fact, ever since 1831; when a business, something like that in

which we are engaged at present, first brought us into contact: our operations at that time were unsuccessful, because the imprudent zeal of the marquis's friends had too much precipitated them. They afforded me, nevertheless, an opportunity of earning the lasting friendship of the marquis and his family. His gallant brother, while commanding us at a barricade in 1832, was laid prostrate by a shot which broke his right leg. Our comrades, thinking that it was all over with him, fled: the attacking force, observing this, made a vigorous assault on the barricade, but it happened to be a remarkably strong one. I had time to take up the marquis, and bear him off. Unfortunately, however, after I had nearly reached a house with my burden, where I knew I could deposit it in safety, a random shot, fired from a friendly window, struck him and killed him in my arms. The same shot also wounded me, for it had passed quite through him; but I was still able to carry him to my point of destination which was no other than the house we have just left."

"I now comprehend much of the mystery," said Adolphe; "but proceed."

"After the unfortunate rising in 1832, the Legitimists took little interest in public affairs; and the marquis returned to his château in Normandy, to superintend the education of his daughter, who was then only a child. He had not married until late in life; and he doted upon her, a a man usually does upon an only child, and more especially, if that child is the child of his old age. I should add, that my success in carrying off the marquis's brother had saved the marquis from all suspicion, at least from all molestation, on the part of the government.

"But the fire which the government supposed that they had effectually quenched by the blood shed at the barricades in 1832, still smouldered; and though the government for the last two or three years have *smelled the smoke* of it, they have never been able to discover the quarter from which it is likely to break out

again, and with redoubled fury. As *our* organization advanced towards completion, I re-opened communications with the marquis. Having consulted with his Legitimist friends, he returned to Paris about six months ago, but has lived in the utmost privacy in his own house, as merely the guest of Father Choiseuil, to whom he had consigned the charge of it, when he quitted Paris in 1832, and who, indeed, was himself left in Paris by the Legitimists to observe and report any unexpected chance which might turn up in their favour.

"Colonel Mercier became acquainted with the marquis while he was stationed in Normandy with his regiment, some time ago. There was nothing in the marquis's situation to forbid him, as a loyal soldier, from holding intercourse with him and his family; and the result, as you know, was a matrimonial engagement between the colonel and the marquis's daughter. When the marquis returned to Paris, he was very loth to leave the countess Annette behind him, unprotected, in Normandy, where her safety would be compromised, should an insurrection take place in Paris, and extend itself to that quarter. Colonel Mercier, too, protested against her being thus abandoned, and urged that she should accompany the marquis to Paris. The marquis, however, for obvious reasons, could hardly afford her an asylum under his own roof, with the certainty of safety either to himself or to her; for, first of all, the presence of a young lady in the house of a priest—as it ostensibly was—might lead to suspicion; and, secondly, in case of an insurrection, of which the marquis was to be the rallying point of the Legitimists, the house and its inmates would be exposed to very considerable danger from the opposite party. In this dilemma, the marquis solicited me, as a friend upon whose judgment, as well as fidelity, he could rely, to find out a safe place of refuge for the young countess, and above all, a place where I should have constant opportunities of observing whether she continued from day to day in safety and good health.

No place appeared to me so well adapted for this purpose as our auberge, where I was sure of having all my commands obeyed, and wishes complied with; and as secrecy was the principal objection, neither the marquis nor the colonel felt any scruple about her assuming the disguise of our hostess's barmaid."

"Is the hostess herself aware of the real rank of her servant?" inquired Adolphe.

"Yes," replied the locksmith; "the secret is in safe keeping with her; for I would far rather confide one to the 'mother' of the companionship of locksmiths—of which her own lamented husband was president before me—than I would even to Father Choiseuil himself, as my confessor. Besides, our mother's knowledge of the secret contributes much to the comfort of Annette."

"One more question," said Adolphe. "Has the marquis taken advantage of Colonel Mercier's passion to inveigle him into this conspiracy? Is Annette aware of the extent to which the colonel has committed himself to it?"

"You have asked two questions instead of one," answered the locksmith; "but I will nevertheless satisfy you upon them both. In the first place, the colonel, until just before the marquis's return to Paris, was not aware that there was any conspiracy at all. The marquis, as a man of honour, was compelled at any risk to depend also upon the colonel, as a man of honour, to divulge to him that if an insurrection of the people against the government took place, he should himself take part with the insurgents, and to request, therefore, that if the colonel must himself be on the other side of the bloody arbitrament, he would feel himself at liberty to cancel the engagement with his daughter. The colonel promptly replied, that if the unfortunate event which the marquis anticipated was ever likely to happen, he should certainly see the propriety of the step suggested by the marquis; but that it never would happen, as he had

resolved, long ago, never again, at the bidding of *any* government, to stain his sword with the blood of his countrymen. To avoid this—for he saw what a catastrophe the wilfulness of the government was precipitating—he assured the marquis that he had for some time requested the War Office to employ him in foreign service; and that this request not having been complied with, there was only one alternative for him, in case of another conflict. Now, Master Renouard, are you satisfied on the first point?"

"Quite," replied Adolphe; "but the other?"

"Annette does *not* know the full extent to which either the colonel or the marquis are likely to commit themselves in this enterprise," said the locksmith. "Nor is it right that she should, for her own comfort."

"On that point I am satisfied, too," said Adolphe.

"Then let us change the subject," quoth the locksmith.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DURING the preceding conversation—which the locksmith informed Adolphe was the business to which he had alluded to at the marquis's house, as necessary for him to dispatch before he went to his appointment at two o'clock—their route had been somewhat circuitous, and had now brought them to the bottom of the Rue Rivoli.

"Do you remember the name of the person whom I told Father Choiseuil I was going to meet?" said the locksmith.

"No," replied Adolphe; "I did not pay particular attention to it, I was so engrossed by my reflections upon what I had already heard."

"Well, then," said the locksmith, "his name is M. Boisson, one of the most remarkable men—or rather, I should say, one of the strangest characters—at this time in France. But I will paint him in full length for you, after you have seen the original. I must premise, however, that his house is a very different one from that of the marquis, though it is used for the same purpose. Moreover, you will see some old acquaintances there, and one you little expect to see; but you must not appear to recognise him, as he will appear not to recognise you. This is the door."

From the external appearance of the house, one would have supposed it to be the residence of some person who was able to live very much at his ease. It might be the private residence of some wealthy member of the Bourse, or of some subordinate, but well-paid government official, or indeed of any person belonging to those classes who form the link between the fashionable world

and the class of tradesmen. The front rooms appeared to be well, though not ostentatiously furnished, and, altogether, it was just such a house externally as one would pass without noticing, from the complete absence of any thing particular about it.

The locksmith rang the bell, and the door was opened by a domestic, in sober, but by no means shabby, livery.

"Is M. Lefevre within?" asked the locksmith.

"I will see, sir," answered the servant; "what name shall I say?"

"M. St. Just," replied the locksmith, "and a friend."

The servant disappeared by a green baized door at the extremity of the narrow hall, which, as is frequently the case in Paris, and especially if the house belongs to a man of business, cuts off the view of the staircase. On his return, he said, bowing, "M. Lefevre will be most happy to see M. St. Just and his friend upstairs, if they have no objection to meeting a few friends whom he now has with him."

The locksmith nodded assent, and, with Adolphe, followed the servant through the green baized door. As the door swung back of itself, and closed, Adolphe fancied that he heard a number of *clicks*, as if twenty bolts had been shot into their sockets at the same time. Beyond this, moreover, they had to pass by another door of the same sort, and still by a third, when they at last came to the staircase, which, instead of facing the passage, ran off to the upper part of the house, at right angles to it on the left. Ascending the stairs, they came to a spacious landing, which must have once been the site of a whole suite of rooms, as it evidently ran along the whole length of the house in front, though the existence of such a large open space within could not be conjectured by persons in the street, in consequence of the arrangements of the furniture of the windows.

At the back of this spacious *salle*, the servant, without ceremony, opened a door, and bade the visitors walk in.

Of all the surprises which Adolphe had yet encountered, this was the greatest of them all. It was not that four gentlemen were sitting in an elegantly furnished room, around a table loaded with the choicest materials for epicurean enjoyment: it was not that he recognised in two of them the AGENT and La Bruyère, and that in a third he conjectured that he saw the remarkable M. Boisson, of whom he had just heard: it was, that, in the fourth, he recognised no other person than Gaspard Ferrete, his old schoolmaster at Autun, and habited precisely the same as when he bade adieu to him there a few days before.

To avoid the danger, if there was any, of betraying, by any look or gesture, his knowledge of Gaspard Ferrete, Adolphe turned his eye upon M. Boisson, and found quite enough there to rivet his attention.

M. Boisson was a man of almost gigantic proportions, and evidently of almost herculean strength. To his broad shoulders were fixed, by a rather short neck, a very small, round head, which was made to appear still smaller by the bloated condition of his cheeks, over which his little eyes twinkled like those of a basilisk. You could tell by them at once that he was both a very jovial and a very mischievous man, while his easy bearing, and the expression of his countenance, showed that he possessed more than ordinary self-possession and determination. Adolphe shrunk from him; for he felt that he was in the presence of a man endowed with enormous powers, both physically and intellectually, for outrage. These were his instantaneous *impressions*, and not studied reflections, for he had no time to reflect. M. Boisson and André Jacquot prevented him, by the rapid and bantering dialogue into which they had rushed, almost before the latter had taken his seat.

"Well, *mon cher* Jacquot, let me embrace you," said Boisson.

"I would rather be embraced by the elephant in the Jardin

des Plantes, I thank you, Boisson," returned André; "you were ordained by Providence, you mountain of muscle, to embrace your *enemies*, and not your friends; and I beg you to reserve them for the bourgeoisie."

"And my friend Louis, eh?" chuckled Boisson, and his eyes twinkled with savage glee.

"No, Boisson, no," replied the locksmith, sarcastically; "remember how generously he included you in the amnesty."

"O yes," returned Boisson, "I always remember a man who pays me a shabby compliment."

"Was it a shabby compliment to trust to your loyalty for the future? Fie, Boisson! you are ungrateful now," quoth the locksmith, in the same tone of pleasant irony as before.

"Come, come, Jacquot," returned Boisson, mimicking the statesman to whom he alluded; "let us, as little Thiers says, divest the question of its irrelevancies. Imprimis, Louis released me from prison, and you say that I owe him something for that, in return for the compliment he paid me in doing so? Now, stripped of its irrelevancies, what was the real nature of the compliment? Do you imagine that he would have released me, if he had not set me down as a man *whose spirit he had broken*. Was that (and he spoke with a ferocity almost demoniac) *a compliment to a man like me?* By God! if I should come within arms' reach of him, I will thank him for it by such an embrace, that it shall be the last he will ever receive; though I shall certainly owe him another, for daring to imprison me at all."

"You would make a good nurse for the old man in second childhood, Boisson," interposed La Bruyère; "only I am afraid you would overlay your baby. But, curse you, you are the only man of my acquaintance, whose wit makes me dry; for when you once begin to indulge in your horrible facetiousness, you are so wrapt up in the inspiration of it, you always forget to push round the bottle."

"May my right hand," roared Boisson, laughing, and striking the table with his right hand, with such force that the bottles and glasses began to dance—"may my right hand, La Bruyère, forget its cunning when it forgets *that*. There, gentlemen, send all the bottles in a merry chase after each other round the table, and do honour to them as they pass—as I do."

So saying, he passed a dozen bottles after each other, in quick succession, quaffing huge bumpers from each—an herculean feat, upon which he was so busily intent, that his guests were enabled to escape, unnoticed, with a single libation. Adolphe expected to see him drop upon the floor; but he only wiped his mouth, and dilated his huge figure, "like a giant refreshed with wine."

"And now, Jacquot," he said, "we would have another round or two, but *non omnibus mortalibus*, as our friend Gaspard here would say; and, besides, we have a little business to despatch, and not a great deal of time to despatch it in. What news from the most pious father Choiseuil?"

"Very tolerable, as times go, Boisson," answered the locksmith. "Read that, and pass it to these other three gentlemen," he continued, alluding to the agent, La Bruyère, and Gaspard Ferrete, and handing to Boisson the two resolutions which had been signed at the house of the Marquis de le Beaume.

Boisson read the documents attentively, and remained silent until the others had done the same, and the documents were returned to him.

"André Jacquot," he then said, and said *sedately*, "if anything could add to my convictions that no form of monarchical government is suited to the genius of our country, it is that a man like you cannot find your proper level, or, rather, proper elevation, under it. Why, talk of Talleyrand—by God! he was a fool, a mere child, to you! You would have twisted him round your little finger, while he was refining upon the question, which was

your blind side, before he ventured to come to close quarters with you. Your stroke of diplomacy with the *préfet* yesterday, was so well made, that it would have hit old Fouché himself off his legs. But this which I hold in my hand, excels even that. You *must* take the Foreign Office, and not attempt to refuse it. Gentlemen, what do *you* think of it?"

"For my part," said the agent, "I must confess that I am not surprised at it, nor shall I be surprised at anything he does."

"And, for my part," added Gaspard Ferrete, "I can only say that if ever I should want to cheat the devil out of my soul, I would much rather send André Jacquot to him, to negotiate on my behalf, than I would a regularly-bred lawyer, although he took a priest with him for his clerk."

"And, for my part," said La Bruyère, who was now getting intoxicated, though he possessed the faculty, which is peculiar to some men, of throwing off his inebriation if any sudden enterprise called him to action—"for my part, I am only surprised that you should think he has done anything wonderful at all, considering that he is president of the *sold-to-Satan* companionship of locksmiths. If the patron of the order, the Prince of Fire—for it is nonsense to call him the Prince of *the air*—was to give André Jacquot the pattern of a key, no matter how difficult the pattern, by which he could find his way into men's hearts, as easily as, by some of his earthly keys, some of his friends find their way into men's houses—I'll go to the devil myself, if André conldn't execute it; and something, I am sure, must have taken place between André and his Saint, or else, how on earth could he contrive to insinuate himself into every man's confidence in the way that he does?"

La Bruyère's theory was received with loud laughter, amidst which the bottles took another trip round the table, but this time

with more moderation on the part of Boisson, and a little less on the part of La Bruyère.

"But come, Boisson," said the locksmith, after the merriment had subsided, "I have not yet heard how you got on in your visit at St. Etienne."

"Jovially and joyfully!" responded Boisson. "They received me and worshipped me as one risen from the dead, and will fight better than the Turks would do, if Mahomet was to come again to lead them on. *Entre nous*, five hundred jolly fellows of them will find their way here a little past dark; and, by the by, Jacquot, I am very much obliged to you for stocking my cellars below, in my absence, with as many good *barrels*,* which I know they will find vastly to their liking." And Boisson burst into another loud roar of laughter at his own wit, and then rewarded it with another huge libation of wine.

"I have heard," he said, wiping his lips with the back of his hand, as usual—"all from La Bruyère that is necessary about Marseilles; so now, André, all that we have to do is to arrange for this evening. You will come, and bring your young friend there with you? Excuse me, Monsieur Renouard, for not having addressed you before; but business, you know ——"

"Must be attended to first," interposed the locksmith. "But, Boisson, a word apart, before we separate."

Boisson arose, and followed the locksmith to a corner of the room, where a few words, in whisper, sufficed for their conference.

"Gentlemen," said Boisson, "it was bad manners for Jacquot and me to whisper before friends; but the fact is this, he was not allowed to mention a certain plan to any one else at present,

* *Musket* barrels, of course.

which a friend suggested, and which I alone can execute. Are you satisfied?"

"And now, disperse," said the locksmith, "each by his own door. You, Adolphe, by the way you entered first."

Adolphe obeyed the mandate, and was conducted out of the house by the same domestic.

CHAPTER XIX.

ADOLPHE, in the course of a minute, was rejoined by the locksmith, who conducted him straight across to the Boulevard, and down that magnificent vista towards Port St. Martin.

At any other time Adolphe, as an utter stranger to Paris, would have found ample matter for observation and wonder during their walk down the Boulevard, and the locksmith, as a perfect *habitué* to it, would also have found ample food for reflection and satire upon the strange variety of classes and characters which would have passed, like a living diorama, under their review. But Adolphe's mind was absorbed by the more startling scenes he had already witnessed, and the locksmith was also intent upon noting a phenomenon which, to his keen eye, was one of portentous augury.

After a continued silence of more than a quarter of an hour, the locksmith spoke.

"My young friend," he said, "forgive my abstraction; since we left M. Boisson's, I have met with much for serious contemplation."

"Indeed," said Adolphe, with surprise. "Had I not been so abstracted myself, I certainly should have said that, since leaving the Rue Rivoli; we have met with nothing at all particular."

"Listen," returned the locksmith. "I have not traversed the Boulevard for the two last days, and, in that brief time, the scene is completely altered. Two days ago you would have observed almost every one strolling and lounging, or quietly seated, and enjoying the balmy atmosphere of a Parisian July, as if they had

no more to do or to think about than the dog who lays himself down by the wall to bask in the sunshine. At this time of the day, you would have found that everything indicated the very repose of gaiety, preparing itself, after the animated political gossip of the morning, for the still more animated pleasures of the theatre at night. Vivacity seemed to be recruiting her powers without losing anything of her suavity, and people nodded and smiled a polite recognition, though they forbore from the effort of the earlier salutation. But what do we see to-day, at the usually quiet hour of three? Everywhere, people gathered into groups, and debating intensely, which denotes anxiety, suspicion, and apprehension. Thus the beasts of the field gather together before a coming storm, though they can as yet see no indication of it in the heavens."

"Do you imagine, then," said Adolphe, "that all this public excitement can exist without anything having transpired as to the nature of the conspiracy which is on foot?"

"These signs of the times," replied the locksmith, "inspire me with no fear of *that*, for I am accustomed to them. They are only signs of the magnetic sympathy by which the emotions of a few powerful minds, in all great crises which, like this, are to determine the future fate of mankind, have ever, by some secret virtue, communicated themselves to the popular mind at large."

"Were I in your situation," said Adolphe, "I should hardly be able to satisfy myself with such a philosophical explanation—more especially, if your friend Boisson possessed that same secret virtue in proportion to the intensity of the emotions which agitate him. Instead of acting by mere magnetic sympathy, I should think that it would give Louis Philippe (in particular) a galvanic shock sufficient to arouse him to a sense of his danger."

"Yes; without knowing in what direction to meet it or to fly from it: to paralyse him by alarm, not to forearm by forewarning him!" answered the locksmith, with a smile. "Why, man, therein

is Louis' *greatest* danger. We have confused and unnerved him But, speaking of M. Boisson, tell me candidly your opinion of him?"

"In half-a-dozen words," replied Adolphe. "I do not like the man."

"Well; he is not a very amiable one, certainly," said the locksmith. "I don't *like* him very much, myself; but what do you think of his capacity?"

"I should be mistaken," answered Adolphe, "if I found him either a profound thinker or a good speaker."

"Pshaw!" said the locksmith; "neither reflection nor rhetoric are his *forte*."

"Then I must give an opinion as to what his *forte* is," returned Adolphe, a little nettled. "I should think that he has a great capacity for *mischief*, and little else!"

"Bravo! Master Renouard; Lavater himself could not have pronounced himself more righteously," said the locksmith. "Mischief is not only the food upon which he lives, but is the element out of which he would die; and have died he must, years ago, for the want of it, had he not been gifted with the peculiar faculty of creating an atmosphere of mischief around himself, let him be where he may.'

"And it is for that peculiar faculty, I suppose," returned Adolphe, "that you find him serviceable? If I were you, I should fear that he would some day or other do *me* a mischief."

"And there is not the slightest doubt that he would, if he could," said the locksmith, laughing; "that is, after he has well got through the mischief on hand. But listen, and I will let you a little into the light of his political history and character.

"What M. Boisson would have been in quiet times—that is, in times when men's minds would have refused to be agitated—there is no telling; perhaps a butcher, or a porter: in England, he certainly would have been a prize-fighter. But, alas! there have

been no quiet times for France since M. Boisson was a mere boy, so that he was brought up in an excellent school for studying the science of insurrection; and he was scarcely twenty-one when the *émeute* of 1830 fortunately broke out to afford him an opportunity of displaying his proficiency. He did wonders, and was rewarded accordingly, but only for wonders of brute strength and animal courage, both of which he possesses in almost unparalleled measure. But this did not much mend his condition—or rather, it made it worse, for the liberality of Louis Philippe enabled him to become acquainted with pleasures he had never tasted before, and which he resolved he would never want again. But from whence were the necessary means to be obtained? Louis Philippe had made a fortune by a revolution, and why should not M. Boisson? And besides, of all the pleasurable excitements he had tasted (since the revolution of 1830 taught him to abhor radishes and black bread), revolution itself was the most irresistible one. Revolution—setting up governments and knocking them down again, for the amusement of the thing—became his ruling passion; and with what industry he has plotted for it, with what audacity he has struggled for it, is almost indescribable! He got up a little one so early as 1831, but that died in embryo. That of 1832 offered him a fairer chance—for he had already acquired something more than a subaltern rank among the pure democrats; and that also failed. The Legitimists then, as I have told you, retired from the field, apparently altogether; another party, I need not mention, also suspended open demonstrations, with the view of organizing themselves better for a better opportunity; and Louis Philippe seemed, to the eyes of the world, to be gradually consolidating his power. But did M. Boisson cease to plot? He might as well have tried to hold his breath for a month, as to abstain from plotting half that time. For a reason, however—to him an intolerable one—there was little encouragement for his vocation here; so he shook the dust off his feet, bade adieu to Paris, and betook

himself to the provinces. A commission agency supplied him with the means of visiting every town in France, and I need not tell you that he did not neglect to do a considerable stroke of business on his own (political) account among the provincial clubs, which still continued in full force. By these means, he acquired great political influence amongst the ultra-democratic party, and, in fact, may be said to be the representative of the provincial portion of it. While he was at Marseilles, another insurrection broke out in Paris. He immediately set the Marseillais in motion and rushed to Paris. But, alas! his star once more mocked him. The insurrection was put down in Paris; and, in his absence, that at Marseilles also. But was M. Boisson at his wits' end, or in despair? Not at all. He rushed to St. Etienne, and there tried to set the game on foot again. There was some sad work at that place, because it was mere fighting for fighting's sake, without the remotest chance of success against the military and civil power. After a fierce resistance, M. Boisson was himself taken, and condemned to twenty years' imprisonment."

"One would have thought," said Adolphe, "that such a termination of so many plots would have sickened him of them?"

"Not at all," replied the locksmith. "He continued plotting in prison, and was concerned in one at the moment he was delivered from prison under the amnesty. This time, however, he will succeed, because the plot is neither of his planning nor under his management."

"And if it does succeed?" said Adolphe, inquiringly.

"He will no doubt," replied the locksmith, "be rewarded with a high post in the new government; but not, if I live, with the one he would have, if he could. He possesses a vast fund of a certain sort of cunning, but it is of too *coarse* a sort to deceive *me*."

"Why surely," said Adolphe, "you are not plotting against one another already?"

"Do you remember how you joked me this morning," said the

locksmith, smiling, "on the possibility of my being the Minister of Police in disguise, because Annette of the auberge has turned out to be the Countess de la Beaume?"

"Very well," returned Adolphe, smiling too.

"And do you remember," continued the locksmith, "my answering that, though not the Minister of Police, I *might* be?"

"Perfectly," answered the other.

"As we are speaking of M. Boisson," proceeded the locksmith, "I will give you the solution of that enigma. Should we succeed, the only post I would willingly accept is that of Minister of Public Works, because I am sure that I should be the most competent for that office, as well as that the office would be the most agreeable one to me. But I have recently discovered that our friend Boisson has fixed his eye on the ministry of police, and as I dare not trust him with it, and no one else seems to have such a partiality for it as to bid for it against him, I am determined to take it myself."

"And does M. Boisson suspect your intention?" asked Adolphe.

"Suspect it?" quoth the locksmith. "I always *tell* a man what I know he will *suspect*. He knows my intention, but he does not know my motive; as I could see by one of his clumsy pieces of *finesse* this morning."

"I do not understand to what passage in the proceedings at M. Boisson's you allude," observed Adolphe.

"Do you not remember his lavish praises on my negotiation at the Marquis de la Beaume's, and his *impressement* that I would consent—nay, that I must not refuse to accept the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs?"

"Yes, I do, very well," answered Adolphe.

"And did you not remark the sudden change in his tone when he addressed me—how he descended at once from the roaring bacchanalian to the considerate statesman?"

"Yes, the change struck me forcibly, and I admired the great

force of volition he must possess to throw off so suddenly the effect of the enormous potations he had swallowed only a few minutes before," answered Adolphe.

"Well," said the locksmith, "Boisson is too much a creature of his impulses to be able to control them in this way, unless under the pressure of some darling object to be achieved. He knew me too well, not to be perfectly aware that I should never give an answer to any proposition which he made to me in his ordinary rollicking manner; for I have taught him that, even as we are, he must address any proposition to me as if we were at the council table, and not at a drinking bout. His seriousness, therefore, was as hollow as his flattery: all he wanted was to lead me to say, that I would not refuse such a highly responsible, as well as honorable office as the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and then he would have got rid of me as a possible rival for the Ministry of Police."

"By my faith!" said Adolphe, "you politicians need have your eyes about you, for you have not only to guard yourself against the censure and machinations of your enemies, but against the flattery and circumventions of your own friends—which, to my simple judgment, appears to be far the more difficult task of the two."

"And you are quite right," returned the locksmith.

"But," said Adolphe, "still I cannot comprehend your motive for keeping Boisson out of the Ministry of Police. What sinister object can he so anxiously desire it for?"

"He does not know that himself," replied the locksmith. "He has no new plot as yet; but he is anxious to get the command of the police in his hands, as an engine all ready to be set in motion when he has one."

"What! a plot against the government he has risked all to set up?" said Adolphe.

"That is as sure and as natural in M. Boisson, as for the sun to rise and set," answered the locksmith.

CHAPTER XX.

"ARE you fatigued?" said the locksmith.

"Not at all," replied Adolphe.

"Then," said the locksmith, "we will drop in for half-an-hour, and see what they are doing at the *Salle des Concerts Spectacles*, about half-a-mile lower down the Boulevard."

"I should hardly have supposed," returned Adolphe, "that, considering the weighty matters you have on hand, you could be in a humour for *concerts* and *spectacles*, however strong may be your disposition to afford me amusement as your visitor."

"I do not wonder at your mistake, my young friend," said the locksmith. "You very naturally associate with a *Salle des Concerts Spectacles* the ideas of delicious harmonies and gorgeous exhibitions. Here, however, you will see nothing of the kind. You will be fortunate, if you hear anything but discord, or see anything more than—certainly a spectacle in its way—the tag-rag and bob-tail of Paris. At the *Salle des Concerts Spectacles*, in about half-an-hour hence, a meeting will be held of the celebrated *Club Social*."

"Social discord," returned Adolphe, "seems to me a contradiction in terms. But what is this *Club Social?*"

"It is a club," replied the locksmith, "which professes to embrace all the various sects of Socialists."

"I have heard my schoolmaster," said Adolphe, "speak of these Socialists; but always with contempt: nay, I should say, with such contemptuous impatience, that he would never condescend to explain to me their peculiar tenets and objects."

"By St. Denis!" said the locksmith, with a laugh, "he would have been a cleverer philosopher than ever I took him to be, had he succeeded in doing anything of the kind. Why, man, you might as well have asked him to define for you the colour of a rainbow,—for they are of all shades, like the rainbow; between the two extremes of downright black and pure white."

"And have they *nothing* in common?" asked Adolphe.

"Oh, yes!" returned the locksmith, "they have a common faith that mankind are not gregarious enough already, and that society would be much improved if all Paris, instead of a closely-packed aggregate of mere next-door neighbours, lived in *one house*. They all agree upon *that* point. That is the fundamental principle of Socialism."

"And if they agree upon this fundamental principle," said Adolphe, "what can they have to differ about?"

"Oh, about the merest trifle in the world!" answered the locksmith, sarcastically. "Simply, upon what terms it would be desirable or possible for all Paris to live together in common under the same roof: that is, to mess in common, like soldiers in barracks, and sleep miscellaneously, like sheep in one fold; so as, with complete equality, to produce the least amount of jealousy and jarring."

"Why, this must be rank madness; none but fools could entertain such a question," said Adolphe.

"There you are most egregiously mistaken," replied the locksmith. "Many of our ablest men do battle upon it; I will give you an instance or two. One of *our* best friends (I am speaking simply as a working-man) is *Louis Blanc*. As far as the labour question is concerned, we only differ on one point; there I would stop: whereas, Louis' conception is, that this is the only initiatory step to the new *ordre social* which is to be our millennium. The single point of difference between us on the labour question is, that all men should be paid alike,—no matter what the quantity or the quality of the work they perform."

"Absurd!" exclaimed Adolphe.

"And yet, I tell you," said the locksmith, "that Louis Blanc is a very acute sort of person; so acute, that I should be led to reconsider my own opinion, solely because it does not coincide with his, did he not require his disciples to go infinitely further still."

"Why, what more extravagant *could* be proposed?" returned Adolphe.

"*This*," answered the locksmith: "that not only should the skilful and industrious receive no more than the unskilful and the idle, but that the sober and thrifty—as regards any posthumous provision for their children—should have no better prospect than the dissipated and extravagant. In short, that a man's savings, after his death, should no longer be divided amongst his children, but be confiscated to the use of all! What think you of that, for a *mild* specimen of Socialism? It goes by the cant term of '*La destruction du principe d'hérédité.*'"

"Monstrous!" exclaimed Adolphe.

"Pshaw!" said the locksmith. "I tell you that this is Socialism in its mildest form. What will you think of it in its severest, St. Simon's?"

"Why, what more monstrous can *he* have proposed, than that a father should not be allowed to make a posthumous provision for his wife and children?" said Adolphe.

"Nothing more," returned the locksmith, "than that there shall be no such cattle, with a private mark, in the social domain as wives, and sons, and daughters, at all: that there shall be no such thing as marriage: that a man shall no more appropriate a woman to himself than anything else: and that all children who are born shall be the children of society at large. The cant for *this* doctrine is, *L'abolition de la famille.*"

"I only wonder," said Adolphe, "that men who preach such doctrines have not had their eyes picked out of their heads by the women of Paris."

"Simple youth," returned the locksmith, "this doctrine has more women for its disciples in Paris than men; and you would not be surprised at this fact, if you knew the meaning of a marriage *à la St. Jaques*,* and what admirable institutions we have in our towns, for enabling fathers and mothers to provide for their children upon the true St. Simonian principle!"

"But, surely, these Socialists cannot be a very formidable body?" said Adolphe.

"They are so formidable," answered the locksmith, "that I should not only be sorry to fall into bad odour with them just now, but I should fear to exasperate them (though I despise them) if I were at the head of a Republican government to-morrow."

"Are they, then, so very numerous?" further asked Adolphe.

"Why, no—they are not; that is, the true believers are not," replied the locksmith, for the first time finding a difficulty in expressing himself. "The men who really understand what Socialism and Communism are,—and, understanding, believe in them—are comparatively few; but those few are inspired with a more than religious bigotry in the persuasion that theirs is the *only* mode of salvation for the country; and, like all fanatics, are inspired with all the cunning as well as recklessness of madmen. That they must be crushed in the end is certain; but, whoever shall have the work to perform, he will find it by far the most difficult obstacle in conducting the Revolution to its proper end—good government."

It did not escape Adolphe's notice, that the locksmith, instead

* A marriage *à la St. Jaques* means nothing more than concubinage, which is the prevailing fashion in Paris to a lamentable degree, not only among the lower, but even among the more respectable classes. The offspring of these left-handed marriages—should there unexpectedly be any—is almost universally made a present of to the *tours* of the Foundling Hospital, which are supported by the State, in order to check the still greater evil of infanticide.

of addressing these remarks to him in his usual easy and amusing manner, seemed rather to be addressing them to *himself.*

"This subject, friend Jacquot," thought Adolphe, "causes you some perplexity."

The locksmith, after pondering awhile, resumed his usual tone.

"No, my young friend, these men are not numerous; but, nevertheless, they are extremely dangerous, for several reasons, —and so would *any* party be in their position. Can you tell me what made David so dangerous to Saul, the King of Israel?"

"Because Samuel had anointed him, I suppose," said Adolphe, innocently.

"Pshaw!" said the locksmith, for the first time, with bitter scorn. "Samuel might have poured a hogshead of ointment upon the head of David, and such a fellow as Saul would not have cared a shekel for his mummery. But it was this,—you have read your Bible?—'David therefore departed, and escaped to the cave Adullam; and every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them.'"

"I do not see the application of the verses, Master Jacquot," said Adolphe.

"You would find the application easy enough," returned the locksmith, "if you knew Paris as well as I do. These Socialists and Communists will never, until they *are* crushed, and *thoroughly* crushed, remain quiet under any *ordre social* but their own; and they will ever, till then, be the nucleus around which every man that is in distress, and every man that is in debt, and every man that is discontented, will rally, without caring any more for their doctrines than the Hebrew scoundrels in the cave of Adullam did for David's title to the throne of Jerusalem. In the coming struggle, they and their *friends* will be *for* us, because to be *for* us, is to be *against* the government. If we succeed, in

less than three months, we must be prepared to find them equally against us, because, equally with the present government, we must refuse to listen to their impossible theories. They will be the cause of much bloody work, my young friend;" and the locksmith shrugged up his shoulders, and sighed.

"But, surely," said Adolphe, "insolvency, distress, and discontent, could not supply this small faction with a sufficient number of recruits to subvert a government?"

"Those, like you, master Renouard," replied the locksmith, "who have seen Paris only in its normal state—that is, if a healthy state really be its normal one—have no conception what it vomits forth when sick with an insurrection. Thousands of hideous spectres then appear upon the scene, of whom, in quiet times, nothing is known but that they have a living existence somewhere and somehow. The lime-kilns of Clichy pour forth their crowds to pillage; the *chourineur*, with sleeve tucked up, and his knife reeking with the gore of animals, runs a muck, like a mad Malay, into the streets, to flesh it in his fellow creatures. Then all the bands of robbers and cut-throats, with which the secret places of Paris abound, and who, at other times, are only known by occasional reports of their mysterious enormities—the *bande Charpentier*, which attacks only the middle class; the *bande Curonsier*, which with impunity has pillaged the whole of the fashionable Faubourg St. Germain; the *bande Gauthier Perez*, which, with hellish spite, confines its ravages to the dwellings of the workman; the *auvergnats*, the *endormeurs*, *étrangleurs*—these, and a hundred other monstrous confederacies, rush into the light, and cry havoc on the side of any party which deserves their thanks for throwing everything into confusion and indulging them with the saturnalia of an insurrection. And these will be the allies of the Socialists and Communists hereafter, in any attack which they may make on the first government of the Revolution."

"And they will play their part, I suppose, in that revolution too?" said Adolphe.

"Yes," replied the locksmith, confidently, to this question, which Adolphe put in a tone which seemed to question the consistency of the locksmith in reproaching the Socialists and Communists with an alliance which he was not about to repudiate himself—"yes; and you would ask whether such a revolution which is only attainable with such an accompaniment as evoking these evil spirits of murder and pillage into horrible activity, will not cost more than it is worth? No; because the revolution is necessary to exorcise or banish them for ever. How has it come to pass that Paris, with the most perfect detective police in Europe, is more infested by robbers and assassins, and person and property are less secure in Paris than in the worst regulated city, not excepting Madrid itself, throughout the length and breadth of the continent? It is that the body of the people are indifferent to the spoliation of the wealthier classes who oppress them—who are themselves, in the eyes of the people, the most obnoxious of spoilers, spoiling them as they do of the just reward of their labour—*their* sole property and sole means of existence. Give Labour her just reward—and *I*, at least, have no other object in this revolution—give Labour her just reward, and Labour, with her myriads of stalwart hands, will rise up and protect property more effectually than an army of a hundred thousand men. *Now*, to point out the abode, or aid in the pursuit of a villain is, among the common people, considered a *crime against misfortune: then*, to shield him, or connive at his escape, will be considered a *crime against society*. Would not this change alone in the feelings and morals of a people, of itself be worth the cost of a revolution, even though its success can only be purchased by giving full swing, for a day or two, to the atrocities which will be extinguished by it for ever?"

They were now at the door of the *Salle des Concerts Spectacles*.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE *salle* into which the locksmith conducted Adolphe was a spacious hall, in which was already assembled one of the most motley crowds that were, perhaps, ever gathered together under a roof in Europe. We have public meetings in England in which both sexes intermingle, but they are almost always composed of the better informed classes of society, and the subjects of discussion, moreover, are mostly of a religious or philanthropic character, and therefore the greatest order and decorum are always observed. But in the *Salle des Concerts Spectacles* on this day, the assemblage was composed of almost every class beneath what might be termed the *haute bourgeoisie;* and, what would on any other occasion have been unaccountable, the presence of women operated as no check in its tumultuous disposition. Indeed the women constituted, if not the most numerous, certainly the most disorderly, portion of it.

The locksmith and Adolphe took their station in one of the corners of the *salle* farthest from the crowd where they could not only observe more advantageously the parties on the platform at the opposite end of the hall, but also hold some conversation together.

"Look," said the locksmith, "at that brawny fishfag from the Poissonnerie, displacing, with her fat red arms, that rather neatly dressed woman (*she* is evidently a shopkeeper); the land mermaid is evidently explaining, in her way, the doctrine of equality."

"What a virago!" observed Adolphe, in turn; "see, now she is thrusting back yon great fellow in a greasy cap. She'll fight her way to the platform at last!"

"Yes; but now she is exemplifying the second position in the doctrine of equality, as taught by that lady who stands so prominent on the platform," said the locksmith. "The first position is, that all women are equal; and the second position is, that women are equal to, and ought to have equal rights with men."

"And who is that lady on the platform?" inquired Adolphe.

"That is the lady," replied the locksmith, "of whom you heard our friend Agricola Perdiguier speak such praises—the celebrated George Sand."

"Good heavens!" said Adolphe; "who would have expected to find such a woman in such a place!"

"Pshaw!" returned the locksmith. "She is in her element. She likes to prove her theory of the equality of the sexes by her practice; and though not quite equal to the famous *soi-disant Chevalier d'Eon*—a pretty woman, who was not content with merely thus appropriating to herself the style and title of the masculine gender, but always dressed *à l'homme*, to prove that all the prescriptive liberties which the men had immemorially arrogated to themselves, quite as well *became a woman*—though not quite equal to her great prototype, George Sand is certainly, as an Amazon, next on the roll of fame."

"And who is that gentleman to whom she is now addressing herself so peremptorily, and who seems to listen with so much obeisance and awe?" asked Adolphe.

"That is M. Considérant, the chief scribe of the sect," answered the locksmith. "And happy for those who hear him it is, that although he can write whole volumes of unintelligible doctrine in a year, he cannot inflict upon them ten lines of it consecutively by word of mouth."

The meeting now began to show some impatience for the commencement of the proceedings; George Sand and M. Considérant came to the point of the platform together, and it then became

apparent what had been the subject of the former's warm expostulation with the latter.

M. Considérant opened his mouth first, but in consequence of the difficulty of finding utterance for his ideas, to which the locksmith had just alluded, George Sand got in the first word.

"*I* or *He?* Which is to be president?" she exclaimed, at the top of her voice.

A tremendous uproar ensued on this point of precedence, which continued so long that it seemed by no means improbable that the meeting would end as it began with it. But at last a tall young man, of a pale, dark cast of countenance, raised his countertenor voice above the Babel chorus, and announced—

"M. Considérant is desirous of developing his plan for a social reorganization which will ensure the universal happiness of man!"

But the brawny fishwife before noticed had by this time worked her way to the foot of the platform, and raising herself above the crowd by means of the handrail, screamed out—

"And who told you, you son of a gallipot, to leave *woman* out of the bargain?"

Though this sally somewhat restored the good-temper of the crowd, it by no means contributed to lessen the noise; and for another quarter of an hour all was clamour and confusion, when another character appeared on the stage.

The appearance of this man was anything but prepossessing, though at the same time it was not actually forbidding. His countenance was precisely one of those which have only one describable trait—vulgarity. He pushed his way to the front of the platform with a swaggering confidence to which every one gave way, and, slipping in between George Sand and Considérant, took each of them by the hand in a most theatrical manner, and made his own bow to the audience. Loud applause greeted his appearance.

The locksmith's back was turned to the platform when this

person made his appearance, for the tumult had for some time prevented any conversation between him and Adolphe. Nor did the increased hubbub arouse him from his reverie until a fiercer storm than ever arose from M. Considérant's infirmity of opening his mouth, without being able to speak. It struck Adolphe that M. Considérant meant to say something complimentary to the new comer—he judged from his manner—but not being able to find readily the expressions suitable to the occasion, the new comer put him gently back to relieve him of the difficulty by speaking for himself. M. Considérant, not to be outdone in generosity, seemed more resolved than ever to deliver himself of his intended eulogy upon his friend, and in turn pulled him back, to regain his former position. Now all this dumb show was unfortunately misinterpreted by the audience, who regarded it as an attempt, on the part of M. Considérant, to prevent the new comer from obtaining a hearing, and immediately there arose such a yell of disapprobation against the "the chief scribe of the Communists," that he looked like Priam, when they drew his curtains and told him that all Troy was on fire.

From every side resounded the cries—"*A bas Considérant! a bas Considérant! Vive* RAMPOLLION!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the locksmith, suddenly turning round as these words struck his ear. "It is Rampollion, by St. Denis! and, as the jackal is here, I am sure that the lion is not far off."

"And who is this M. Rampollion?" inquired Adolphe, "whose appearance seems to cause you so much surprise?"

"Surprise!" said the locksmith. "I should be little surprised at anything M. Rampollion might do, even on his own account; and not at all at anything he did on his master's. You will see M. Boisson again directly."

The words were hardly spoken, when, at the back of the platform, a form suddenly thrust itself a head and shoulders above those in advance. There was no mistaking the man. He moved

through the crowd, through which others would have had to buffet their way like a cock-boat with an ebbing tide, with as much ease as a man-of-war moves through the waters which seem to recede submissively on either side to make way for its passage. The pale, dark young gentleman fell back as if he was afraid that an elephant was about to tread on his toes. M. Considérant, without the word of command, executed with inconceivable rapidity the movement "Rear ranks! Make open order!" all, indeed, shrank from the gigantic republican as he approached the hand-rail. *All*, did we say? No, *not* all; for there stood George Sand, without stirring an inch, and appealing, by a triumphant glance, to the spectators, whether she was not asserting, by so doing, the equality of *her* sex even with the greatest of the other.

And though the spectators took no notice of her by-play at the moment—so exclusively was their attention directed to M. Boisson—she was not long without the reward of her intrepidity.

M. Boisson, in fact, was a most accomplished demagogue. No one, like him, could take in the *composition* of a large assemblage of persons at a bird's-eye view, and decide in a moment how to half win the battle by the first blow. After making his bow to the spectators, he turned round, and, taking George Sand by the hand, saluted her with a noble gallantry which conveyed respect and admiration. The next moment there was such a burst of applause, that the windows of the *salle* vibrated as they would have done to a salute of cannon. Again, and again, and again was it repeated, until it died away, at last, in three grand rounds of "*Vive Boisson! Vive Boisson!*"

"I forgive M. Boisson the rashness of the experiment for its success," said the locksmith. "By God! by that one stroke he has won the hearts of all the viragos in Paris. But see," he added, bursting into a fit of laughter quite unusual with him, "look at poor George Sand; there is she curtseying while Boisson is bow-

ing, and with charming simplicity putting down half this uproar of applause to her own account!"

While the locksmith was pointing with his finger towards the platform, his eyes and those of Boisson met. Mute signals were exchanged, and Boisson proceeded to address the assemblage *ad libitum*.

"I perceive," said Adolphe, "that you and Boisson have recognised each other."

"Yes," returned the locksmith. "He was undecided how to proceed, for he felt that his success had already been so large, that he dreaded impairing it by a false step. However, I have reassured him. Rampollion was only his pilot balloon; and, even when fairly launched in mid-air, he needs an *indicator* who understands the currents of popular feeling, like myself, to direct him. But listen to him."

Boisson's eloquence was certainly of anything but a high order, but it had this merit—that it was such as his audience sympathized with. The treatment of his subject, too, though anything but masterly, was *artful*. No man in France could have addressed such an audience so much to their taste. Every point he made, was made in *argot*—that is, in the *patois** of the lowest orders of Paris. Indeed, much of his raciness, as a conversationalist over the bottle, resulted from his perfect mastery of this 'rogues' lingo.' His peroration, however, was the grand stroke of all. He did not advocate his own cause. He did not condescend to tell them what *that* was. He did not solicit *their* aid or confidence, but he generously promised *his* to them. "I can see!" he exclaimed, "that you will not tolerate your wrongs and oppressions much longer. I see that your patience is nearly exhausted by your prolonged sufferings. I see that you may, at any time,

* The thieves and blacklegs of London have also an *argot* of their own, which by the uninitiated is called *slang*, but which they call *patter*—an evident corruption of *patois*.

perhaps to-morrow, or the next, or the day after that, be provoked suddenly to make the attempt to break your bonds asunder. Your cause is, and must be, in your own hands; but the moment you rise to assert it, I will be with you—head, hand, and heart. I will make your cause mine, in the full confidence that you will not abandon me to the disgrace of having risked my life and fortune for those who would not, at last, fight out their own battle with me to the uttermost."

The applause was again tremendous.

"Come," said the locksmith, "let us go; the play is over;" and the locksmith and Adolphe, being outside the crowd, found their way into the Boulevard without delay.

"This has been a busy day with us already, Master Renouard," said the locksmith, "but the business is not yet finished, if you are inclined to go through with it."

"Certainly; by all means, I am," replied Adolphe.

"Then let us make our way to the auberge at once," said the locksmith, "and take some refreshment, quietly; and, by the way, it will be better not to show, by any intimation, or even inadvertence in your manner, that you know who Annette is while we are there this afternoon. It would cause us some interruption, and you may use your own discretion when you meet her at night."

"I will take care," returned Adolphe.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALTHOUGH the locksmith had somewhat quickened his usual pace, Adolphe could not refrain from asking him for something respecting M. Rampollion, who had been M. Boisson's "pilot balloon" at the meeting they had just quitted.

"M. Rampollion," replied the locksmith, "is a very difficult man to give you any clear idea of: first, because there is nothing at all striking in the man himself; and secondly, because, though personally such a perfect nonentity, he fills so many parts in our drama, like the 'walking gentleman' of the theatres, that if I were to describe his function of to-day, you would not know him by the same official test to-morrow."

"He is then, I suppose," said Adolphe, "that negative sort of character called 'handy Jack;' that is, a Jack in office, who has no objection to turn his hand to anything—a sort of a creature whom we call on a farm 'the odd man,' who is set about all sorts of odd jobs, which it would be a waste of time for better men to attend to."

"And yet," muttered the locksmith, as if soliloquizing rather than answering, "that Rampollion may one day do an infinity of mischief. Boisson, at the same time, treats him too contemptuously and trusts him too much."

"I should hardly have thought," said Adolphe, "that this was consistent with one of M. Boisson's principal characteristics—cunning."

"Your cunning people," replied the locksmith, "are sure, in the long run, to be over-reached in one of two ways—that is, either

by a fool or by themselves. I have myself more than once protested to M. Boisson against the footing upon which he keeps this Rampollion in his retinue. It is as inconsiderate as my Lady Slippery making her maid a confidante in all her intrigues, and at the same time treating her continually with that sort of insulting *badinage* as an inferior, which a woman never forgives."

"Not knowing what the footing is upon which this Rampollion stands with M. Boisson, of course I cannot appreciate the force of your illustrations," observed Adolphe, who was anxious to learn more of the relations between this worthy couple of conspirators.

"I will tell you," said the locksmith. "Democrat and low-bred as Boisson is, he has a strong passion for affecting, when he is perchance flush of means, the airs and graces of an aristocrat. Above all things, he is fond of having a 'man of business,' to whom he can affect to refer all minor matters as being beneath his own regard and attention. Well, this Rampollion is his 'man of business;' and as, even under ordinary circumstances, there must be many little meannesses and evasions concerted between master and man who have to work together in this way, Boisson treats him at once as a crony and a menial. Now I have (perhaps in jest, perhaps in earnest) once or twice to-day given you credit for some penetration into *character*, but it is very plain that you have a very dull eye for taking notice of persons."

"I am certain," said Adolphe, "that I shall never forget the person of any individual we have come into collision with to-day."

"You would be sorry to wager your salvation—or what, perhaps, you value more highly, your hopes of your Marie—upon *that*," returned the locksmith, with a provoking archness of expression.

"Well," said Adolphe, laughing, though somewhat vexed, "I

should be sorry to venture either of those most important stakes against any possibility whatever; but I would venture my first week's wages as a terrassier, against a pint of *vin ordinaire*, that I shall never forget even the dress of any person with whom I have been in company to-day."

"Don't say you never shall, for you have already," returned the locksmith, sharply. "Do you perfectly remember the porter at M. Boisson's?"

"Perfectly," answered Adolphe.

"And you perfectly remember M. Rampollion?"

"Perfectly," he answered again.

"Well, most acute of observers," quoth the locksmith, "M. Rampollion and the porter are the same person."

"Well, by St. Denis! I should have fairly lost my week's wages," said Adolphe; "but, in extenuation, I must tell you that when I first clapped my eyes on M. Rampollion, I thought that I had seen somebody like him before; but then the cut of the man was such an ordinary one, that I did not give myself the trouble to ask myself when or where."

"Very likely," returned the locksmith. "But you must observe that there was serious plot, or facetious masquerade, in M. Rampollion performing the part of the door porter. It is M. Boisson's ordinary conduct towards Rampollion; and, though if Rampollion was a high-minded man, who could patiently bear with some small indignities for the sake of serving, however humbly, a noble cause, Boisson's error might produce no bad consequences; yet Rampollion's being one of those little minds which rankle under even little slights, I fear that, some day or other, the worm will turn against the foot which treads upon it."

"But, surely," said Adolphe, "you do not mean to say that M. Boisson trusts this man with any secret that might compromise, or even ruin him?"

"Judge for yourself," replied the locksmith. "You remember Boisson speaking of his five hundred boys who are expected up from St. Etienne to-night."

"I do," replied Adolphe.

"And do you also remember his thanking me for storing his cellars, in his absence, with the same number of *barrels* for them which he was sure they would find to their liking?"

"Yes," said his listener.

"Well, these five hundred barrels," continued the locksmith, "are neither more nor less than five hundred well-mounted musket barrels. In fact, the extensive cellars under the house are a perfect dépôt of fire-arms, which Boisson has been collecting by degrees for some months."

"And how has he contrived to collect such a quantity without exciting suspicion?" inquired Adolphe.

"They are not collected in Paris, nor even in France," replied the locksmith. "There is a place in England called Burton, famous all over the world for its ale; and there is another place called Birmingham, even still more famous for its fire-arms. Now we have an agent at both places. The agent at Burton purchases barrels of ale and sends them to the agent at Birmingham. The agent at Birmingham draws off the ale out of the Burton barrels into other barrels, and then packs the former with gun-barrels and gun-stocks; and thus filled, they are consigned, as Burton ale, to a house in Paris; and as the barrels have the genuine Burton *brand* of Allsop and Co. on them, which is well known to all our custom-house officers, they pass without suspicion or examination."

"A most ingenious device, truly," remarked Adolphe.

"And there is also below no small quantity of clothing," continued the locksmith; "uniforms in imitation of those not only of the national and municipal guards, but even of some of the regiments of the line."

"And how," inquired Adolphe, "did you procure *those* ?"

"Oh ! leave the worthy companionship of tailors to manage *that* part of the business," replied the locksmith, laughing.

"But," said Adolphe, "though I see the value of a plentiful supply of fire-arms, I do not exactly comprehend that of the uniforms. A man will fight as stoutly, and take as good an aim, in one jacket as in another."

"You are getting dull, my friend," returned the locksmith. "The men who will wear these fine jackets are not intended to fire a shot."

"Then what on earth *are* they intended for ?" said Adolphe: "to be fired *at* ?"

"They must take their chance of *that*," coolly answered the locksmith. "But, once more, listen. You must have seen sufficient to-day to assure you that the disaffection to the present government is not confined to a class, but that, on the contrary, it is so far general that Louis Philippe has no force to depend upon except that of the *bourgeoisie*, the national and municipal guards, and the regular troops. And of this, I am quite sure, that if, as far as the municipal guard and the regular troops are concerned, the question was to be decided peaceably by the secret ballot, Louis Philippe would have but an indifferent minority in his favour. But, between secretly entertaining an opinion, and acting upon it, there is, in the case of the soldier, a very great difference. I have seen soldiers fight for a whole day in Paris with a sort of mechanical zeal for a cause which, in their hearts, they detested, and against which they would have turned, even in the very thick of the fray, could they have come to an understanding with each other, or had any accidental circumstance occurred to inspire them with the persuasion that their comrades had already come to the resolution upon which they all secretly wished for an opportunity of acting. Frequently one

resolute man refusing to fire upon the people, would have decided the whole regiment to revolt and side with the popular cause."

"That," interposed Adolphe, "I can readily conceive."

"But, on the present occasion," continued the locksmith, "we do not mean to leave this to chance, but to take the initiative ourselves."

"You do not mean to say," again interposed Adolphe, "that you intend to introduce some of your partizans surreptitiously amongst the municipal guards and regular troops in the disguise of their own uniforms, in order that they may play the parts of decoys? I should think that this would be by far too clumsy a trick to succeed, because it must be detected ere the call of the muster-roll is concluded."

"I give you credit for your sagacity, my young friend," said the locksmith; "we are not such bunglers as that. Besides, we intend to play *decoy* game on a much larger scale. We shall have a duplicate of a certain company of the regulars of our own. *These*, of course, will set the example of revolting to the side of the people *en masse*. The rumour will fly with the velocity of sound in a thousand directions, and no one will be able to detect the patriotic cheat. Whole regiments will eagerly follow the example of their pseudo-comrades; the people themselves will be deceived into ten-fold enthusiasm, and the government will be confounded and paralysed, because they will lose all confidence in their only arm of strength."

"I must confess," said Adolphe, "that the more you develope your plans, the more I am astonished at the foresight and ingenuity with which they have been prepared. But you have still left one serious obstacle out of your account; for there will still remain the national guard to be disposed of. And, recollect, they will fight like men who are fighting for their all; for they cannot be so blind as not to see that the insurrection is in

reality not so much against the *bourgeoise* king as against the *bourgeoisie* themselves."

"Pardon me, my friend," returned the locksmith; "we have *not* forgotten to take our *friends* the bourgeois guard into our account. Every calculation has been duly made for them; and, for my part, I heartily wish that they would fight the battle out when it is begun; but they *will not*. They will not sacrifice a hair to save Louis Philippe. I have studied and know them well."

"But is not their cause identified with that of Louis Philippe?" asked Adolphe.

"Yes, just as long as Louis Philippe can ride with a firm seat and a tight rein; but the moment he is in danger of being unhorsed, they will leave him to his fate. The devil a bit will they incur the risk of being run over by attempting to save him."

"If you are confident of this," said Adolphe, "I cannot understand why you should so heartily wish that they would fight it out, except for the mere gratification of your spleen against them; a weakness which I should not have expected to meet with in a patriot and philosopher like my friend André Jacquot?"

"The sarcasm, my young friend, would have been well timed, if it had been just, and I would have thanked you for the reproof from my heart," returned the locksmith. "But it is not because I hate the bourgeoisie, and long for their extermination, that I so heartily wish that they would fight it out. I wish to fight it out with them *now*, because if we do not, we shall have to fight it out with them hereafter. Whether I survive the coming struggle or not, remember my words. The national guard, as soon as they see that Louis Philippe's situation is more than doubtful, will consult their own interest and safety, and be the first to *fraternize* with the people."

"And what more could you desire?" asked Adolphe.

"Anything but *that*," answered the locksmith; "for what will the people get by fraternizing with *them*? Suppose that they promise the people the main point of their charter—*Vive en travaillant*—for which so much blood will have been shed; will the armed and legioned bourgeoisie keep their promise, think you, when the people are naked and dispersed? As much as the wolf kept his promise to the stupid stork who risked her long neck down his throat to save him being choked by a bone. 'Think yourself lucky,' said the wolf, when the simple bird asked for the promised reward, 'that I did not snap your head off!'"

"But," said Adolphe, "if the people get the upper hand in this struggle, they will, at least, be able to enforce the principle of *equality* in one important point, and which appears to me to embrace all the rest that are practicable,—I mean an equal voice for all in the making of the laws; and since the people are as twenty to one in number against the bourgeoisie, the oppressive domination of the latter must be at an end."

"You only reason as many even sanguine republicans reason," answered the locksmith; "but they neither look wide enough nor deep enough. They do not look wide enough because they reason of all France from Paris, Lyons, and other great seats of mechanical and operative industry, and forget the still greater, and less enlightened and less ardent population of the provinces; and they do not look deep enough, because they do not calculate upon the desire for the restoration of order which will succeed the convulsion of a revolution, and the fear which will be artfully stimulated in the minds of the rural electors of still further pretensions and encroachments on the part of the triumphant *ouvriers*. Depend upon it, universal suffrage will not create a national assembly favourable to the workman, but one which

will conspire with the bourgeoisie and their national guard against him, and the workman will have to fight it out with the armed bourgeois at last. But we have discussed politics enough, for we are at the door of our auberge, and have need to discuss something more pleasant and substantial."

CHAPTER XXIII.

On entering the auberge the locksmith requested Adolphe—after allowing him merely time to exchange a distant salutation with Annette—to walk up into the club-room, while he remained with Annette himself to decide upon the merits of the respective items in her not very elongated bill of fare.

This "labour of love," as it certainly is with all Frenchmen who are at all amateurs in the noble art *savoir vivre*, seemed to occupy the locksmith so long, that Adolphe thought he must be looking to the cooking as well as to the selection of their dinner. At length, however, the locksmith, Annette, and the dinner made their appearance together, and the guests of mine hostess sat down to appease two excellent appetites, Annette waiting upon them as usual.

Besides, however, the pleasure of relishing a couple of savoury grilled chickens, Adolphe was not sorry to be thus busily employed for a time, because he could not avoid feeling some embarrassment in consequence of the new light in which he must henceforward regard his platonic *chère amie*, Annette, without betraying to her for the present that he was cognisant of her secret. His tact, (fortunately perhaps for his credit with the locksmith), was not put to any severe test, for immediately after the cloth was removed, and a sealed bottle placed on the table, Annette withdrew without making any attempt at conversation.

"Come," said the locksmith, "we will drink after the English fashion, 'to our absent friends.' With whose name shall I couple the toast?"

"My old schoolmaster, Gaspard Ferrete," replied Adolphe.

"With all my heart—the health of Gaspard Ferrete, and a hearty welcome to his re-appearance in Paris," said the locksmith.

"If," said Adolphe, after having duly honoured the toast, "there were two things, which, among all the things I have heard and seen this morning, surprised me at the moment more than any two others, they were first, that Gaspard Ferrete should be intimately known to, and highly respected by, the Marquis Le Beaume; and secondly, that I should meet him at the table of M. Boisson."

"You would not have been at all surprised," returned the locksmith, "had the past history of poor Gaspard Ferrete been known to you. The family of the Marquis Le Beaume owe infinitely more to him, than they do to me. What I did, was done upon the impulse of the moment, and excepting a slight wound, it brought no inconvenience upon me. But poor Gaspard, his was an act of generous revenge upon a man who had spurned him, and it entailed upon him not only the ruin of all his hopes, but a disgrace which must last for life unless this attempt of ours succeeds!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Adolphe; "and this is the man, whose morose melancholy has excited even among the simple and kind-hearted villagers of Autun, dislike instead of pity! I wish that I knew his history, that I might sympathize with his misfortunes. Are you at liberty to communicate it to me?"

"I am," replied the locksmith; "indeed, I was specially commissioned to do so. Hear what he says in the letter which you delivered to me." The locksmith took the letter from his pocket and read the following extract:—"'To you, my oldest and truest friend, I commit the task of communicating to the dear boy the circumstances which have reduced me so low in the eyes of the world, for I wish him to *know me* before we meet again. And should we meet again before you have had an

opportunity of complying with my request, so contrive that our recognition of each other be postponed until you have done so.' Now you can understand the reason of my desiring you not to recognise him at M. Boisson's."

"Unfortunate Gaspard! He has been reduced low indeed—for who amongst the poor, in France, so poor as the schoolmaster!" moralized Adolphe.

"He has been reduced much lower than you imagine," said the locksmith. "You are not aware that all the time he has been the schoolmaster of Autun, he has been in the wretched condition of a *forçat* under *surveillance*!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Adolphe. "What a bitter dispensation for such a man to endure!"

"Shall I begin with my narrative?" said the locksmith.

"I am all impatience for it," replied Adolphe.

"When I first knew Gaspard Ferrete," commenced the locksmith, "he was, as you have heard before, a fellow clerk in a mercantile establishment with La Bruyère. He was, however, La Bruyère's senior by several years—indeed, he was the senior clerk to whose judgment the most important branch of a merchant's business, that of selecting the best foreign markets for consignments, was intrusted; and so valuable was he to the firm that he might at any moment have insisted upon a junior partnership in it with success. He was, however, only then about twenty-eight, and had resolved to delay his application for a share in the concern until he returned from a voyage to Martinique and South America, whither it was found advisable that he should repair in order to inspect the long unsettled accounts of the agencies of the firm in that part of the world.

"This voyage, however, he was destined never to accomplish.

"His father was a clerk in the service of the government, and ostensibly attached to the Department for the Interior. There seemed, however, to be no distinct duties connected with the

office he held there, although his salary was that of the highest class. About a fortnight before his intended departure for the West, his father died, leaving him a very handsome property, but no claim whatever, as far as Gaspard knew, upon the government which he had served.

"You may, therefore, judge what was his surprise when, a few days after his father's funeral, he received a polite summons to attend upon the Minister of Police at his earliest convenience.

"Gaspard lost no time in paying his respects to that high functionary, who received him with the greatest politeness in his private room.

"'I have sent for you, M. Ferrete, to express to you on the part of the government the high sense it entertains of the services of your late father, and its regret for the loss of them. Beyond this I have little more to say than that the government do not think that they could find so eligible a successor to his office as his son, if he thinks proper to accept it.'

"Gaspard was so astonished by this unexpected offer, that he could only very incoherently express his thanks for the high honour intended him, and something about his sense of his incompetency, &c.

"'Why as to *competency*,' said the minister, 'I suppose that your father communicated to you, at some time or other, the peculiar nature of the duties he had to discharge?'

"'No, sir,' replied Gaspard; 'although he frequently expressed an intention to do so.'

"'That is unfortunate,' said the minister, in a tone of disappointment. 'I find by the archives of this office that my predecessor specially charged your father to do so on the first favourable opportunity. However, there is no help for his neglect now; and happily it is not very material—that is, if you are willing to accept your late father's situation, and be instructed in the duties of it afterwards.'

"'To that, sir, I can certainly have no objection, but on the contrary, feel deeply obliged to your consideration for my inexperience,' replied Gaspard.

"'That is well, M. Ferrete, and I may as well swear you into the office at once,' said the minister. 'Here is the identical oath sworn and subscribed by your father himself upwards of twenty-five years ago. You had better read it.'

"Gaspard took the piece of parchment handed to him by the minister, and read as follows:—

'June 10, 18—.

'I, Jaques Ferrete, hereby swear, as witness my sign-manual below, that I will not quit or abandon the office which I shall this day undertake under his Majesty's Government, without the special licence of the President of the Council for the time being. I moreover swear, that I will faithfully keep all secrets connected with my office that may come to my knowledge; and should a breach of trust be proved against me to the satisfaction of the Council, I confess myself to be in *probato delicto*, and liable to be dealt with accordingly.

'(Signed) Jaques Ferrete.'

"Gaspard saw nothing objectionable in this oath, recommended, too, as it was, by the example of his revered parent. He therefore took and subscribed it without hesitation.

"'And now,' said the minister, 'I must impress upon you that the office upon which you are about to enter is the most delicate and responsible one under the government. Your reward, if you are zealous, and above all, faithful, will be large, as you may suppose, from the handsome fortune your father has been enabled to bequeath you. You will be, as he was, ostensibly attached to the Department of the Interior; but your principal duties will be here, and the world must be no more acquainted with that secret than *you* yourself were in the time of your father. If you

marry, even your wife must not know it, any more than your mother did. And now, good morning. Go at once to your late father's office at the Department for the Interior, and you will meet with a person who will instruct you in all necessary details.'

"Gaspard left the Minister of Police highly elated by this unexpected good fortune. He proceeded straight to the department, and in his father's well-known office, there found a gentleman with whom you are acquainted—Mr. ——."

"THE AGENT?" interposed Adolphe.

"The same," continued the locksmith; "and from him Gaspard learned for the first time in what capacity his father had been really employed by the government for a quarter of a century. Have you ever heard of the SECRET OFFICE?"

"I have, and of the nature of the AGENT'S connexion with it," replied Adolphe, thrown off his guard by the intense interest which the locksmith's narrative was exciting in his breast.

"Hum!" muttered the locksmith. "And I can guess from what quarter the information came. But *n'importe*," he continued, recollecting himself,—"then I need only inform you, in brief, that Gaspard Ferrete became the chief scrutineer of the Secret Office, and subordinate only to the agent, who was himself the subordinate medium of reporting to the government."

"And the original sin of accepting such an office," interposed Adolphe, "was, I have no doubt, the source of all his after misfortunes?"

"It was," returned the locksmith. "But do not judge of him too harshly. He had known his father to be one of the kindest men living—a man who would step out of his way to avoid hurting a worm, or even alarming a bird—and yet he had found the duties of the office not incompatible with his philanthropy, his sensibility, and his honour. The AGENT successfully urged this argument to remove the scruples—nay, the aversion—which

Gaspard felt against the office; but had Gaspard fully comprehended the jesuitical tenour of the oath he had only as yet conditionally taken—for it was only taken conditionally on his entering upon the office—he most certainly would have declined it. The latter part of the oath to be faithful, was contrived to embrace the former part of it, by which the juror surrendered all power of retiring from the office, without the special leave of the President of the Council; and after being once deluded into an actual acceptance of it, poor Gaspard found that the penalty of abdicating or abandoning it, expressed by the ambiguous phrase 'to be dealt with accordingly,' was nothing less than solitary imprisonment for life in the castle of Vincennes!"

"Horrible!" exclaimed Adolphe. "But what motive could the government have, in selecting the son for a victim after the father!"

"This has been the immemorial custom," replied the locksmith, "and has given rise to a silly tradition, that all the situations in the Secret Office are hereditary punishments inflicted upon particular families for some great ancestral crime—commonly supposed to be *regicide;* but this is nonsense. The policy of always inveigling the eldest son into the situation vacant by the death of the father is obvious,—namely, to prevent the publication of any posthumous revelations which the father might leave behind him, respecting this abominable office. Jaques Ferrete had, in fact, left some papers of this kind behind him—but they merely vaguely conjured Gaspard not to accept the situation if offered to him—and above all, they did not fall into Gaspard's hands until too late."

"And Gaspard entered upon his irrevocable mission?"

"He did," was the reply; "and from that moment his doom was sealed. To the world he seemed to be the most prosperous of young men—within that little world of his own, his heart, he was the most miserable; and the greatest misery of all, he could

confide the cause of his wretchedness to no one. For my part, I at first thought that his melancholy might be accounted for by physical causes—that he was merely labouring under a not uncommon disease called *hypochondria*; but M. de P——n, the most acute physician in France, assured me that his nerves were as sound as copper wire. Then I imagined that he was the victim of some disappointed passion; but here again I was wrong; for he assured me, when I probed him to the heart's core on this delicate point, that he had never yet seen the woman whom he could love as he knew he was capable of loving. To all my entreaties and prayers that he would confide in me, and allow me the privilege of lightening his sorrows, by participating in them, a vacant stare, or a melancholy shake of the head was the only answer. I could see that something weighed heavy in his soul, but the secret defied all my friendly arts of observation and scrutiny.

"What astonished me most was, that while in this downcast humour, he by no means shunned society, but courted it; but after having passed apparently the most agreeable evenings amongst his friends, he always returned home more gloomy and desponding than ever. It was my constant practice—though I did not affect an equal station in life—to meet him at his own house on such occasions, and so far from ever complaining of the intrusion, he was even as grateful to me for such unasked-for attention, as a patient might be to a considerate nurse. One night he alarmed me for the state of his intellects, by suddenly saying—'André! did you ever hear of the fate of the wretched Italian, who was gifted with the fatal property of the *evil eye?* What must he have felt (if his heart yet remained human), while conscious that he could only gaze upon the beautiful and good to destroy! must not *his* have been the most unhappy of all missions upon earth?' and he buried his face in his hands, and wept.

"I left him that night in greater anxiety than ever; but to my surprise, on the succeeding evening, he was more calm than I had seen him for months. Poor creature! he had found relief even in that obscure revelation to a friend, and in his own tears."

A gentle rap was heard at the door, and then Annette entered without delay.

"I merely came," she said, "to see if you wanted your bottle replenishing; but I see that you have as yet scarcely touched it."

"No, Mademoiselle Annette," answered the locksmith. "I have been relating to our friend the unfortunate adventures of poor Gaspard Ferrete, his old schoolmaster."

"You promised me, Master Jacquot, that you would one day favour me with the continuation of those adventures, of which, you may remember, you only related to me a part."

"Sit down, then, Mademoiselle, for I have just arrived at that point in the narrative where the thread of my story was broken, while I was relating it to you."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"I HAD just, Mademoiselle, arrived at that point of my story, at which once before I was interrupted by a lady, as now, while relating it to yourself," continued the locksmith. "Both you, therefore, and Master Renouard will be able to follow me, *pari passu*, as we used to say at school, through the remainder of it.

"That part of the story which I have already gone through, may not unaptly be termed the first phase of the terrible punishment which was (wisely, I hope) inflicted upon poor Gaspard for his involuntary crime of associating himself with that worst of inquisitions, the SECRET OFFICE.

"A day or two subsequent to the evening when he alluded with such agony, and at the same time with such metaphorical obscurity, to the wretchedness of his situation—dimly comparing it with that of the fabled Italian, who is cursed with an *evil eye*—he visited me in this room.

"'André,' said he, 'I am not at liberty to tell you what has oppressed my spirits so heavily, since I have been at the—the—the Department for the Interior, because you may readily suppose, that the secret is not my own. However, I begin to see that I have allowed it to press on my imagination too much. You are an excellent physician for the mind; what do you advise me to do?'

"'Now,' said I, 'Gaspard, you speak like yourself—like a man who is returning to his reason. All we have to do, is to prevent a relapse; and for that purpose, *malgré* all the cant in the world, I advise a little wholesome dissipation. And think yourself

lucky in having a physician who prescribes gratuitously, and at the same time, a fortune ample enough to pay all the apothecaries of pleasure in Paris.'

"'A thousand thanks, my friend,' he cried; 'you have now only one more favour to confer—will you be my travelling as well as *prescribing* physician?'

"'Pshaw, Gaspard,' I replied; 'you know I have too many other patients among the worthy companionship of locksmiths to attend to. But this I will do—I will grant you a consultation as often as you desire.

"'I shall tire out your friendship, I fear,' said he; 'but, as by that smile you defy me, I accept the challenge. God bless you, André.'

"From that day Gaspard was, outwardly at least, an altered man. His first step was to a handsome house in the Rue St. Honoré, which he furnished with costly taste, though not with extravagant display. His official duties apparently occupied but a small portion of his time; and his fortune was ample, because his bare salary alone was thirty thousand francs a year; and he possessed besides all the savings which his kind and frugal father had accumulated out of the same income, during five-and-twenty years. He was, therefore, emphatically a rich man, even on these two presumptions; but I was not aware at the time, that his wealth far exceeded these limits. The fact is, that he found himself, *after* his installation in the fatal office, one of the wealthiest men in Paris. Not only his father, but his ancestors, for several generations, had enjoyed it, and he found himself the heir of all the profits derived from it, for more than a century and a half.

"Nor did the style of living into which he suddenly launched at all surprise the public. His father had always enjoyed the reputation of great wealth, and on his succeeding to the same office, every one regarded him as doubly a favourite of fortune.

The comparative retirement, too, in which he indulged during the first year after his father's death, was charitably, though not truly, attributed to a praiseworthy respect for the memory of his parent; and therefore the *éclat* with which he suddenly came out as a votary of pleasure and fashion created no surprise.

"You would scarcely credit me if I was to describe to you the Gaspard Ferrete of that day. Conceive a handsome and somewhat melancholy gentleman of thirty, gifted with a naturally good taste for dress and equipage, and at the same time of a literary though not pedantic turn of mind; enjoying himself quietly, though luxuriously, as a Parisian bachelor. Moreover, with the kindest of all dispositions, he was as discriminative in his bounties as he was in the selection of his society; and this made him not only universally courted, but respected.

"It so happened, that the next house to his in the Rue St. Honoré was tenanted by an old royalist gentleman, who, with his daughter (an only child), led a very retired life; his retinue comprising only two female servants and a footman. One of these female servants was, as you may suppose, especially reserved to the service of the young lady; and Gaspard had frequently, while dressing above stairs, noticed them walking in the contiguous garden together.

"But, for some months, he remarked nothing more to himself than that the 'young lady' next door possessed a very fine figure; and although he frequently met her with her attendant in the street, as he was leaving his own house, he never dreamed of even the gallantry of a passing bow. And, but for an accident, in all probability, they never would have known more of each other than that they were strangers, though next-door neighbours.

"On the last night of the carnival, Gaspard was at a *bal masqué*. He was just about to retire, when a lady in a domino rushed past him in evident terror of a hideous mask who

was pursuing and tormenting her. In her extremity, she exclaimed, 'M. Ferrete, as you are a neighbour, protect me from this ruffian, and my father will be eternally obliged to you.' Thus appealed to, Gaspard could not do otherwise than take the incognita under his charge, and convey her home in his cabriolet, which was waiting below. You may judge his surprise, when she requested to be set down at the door next to his own, and indeed, turned out to be the daughter of the old royalist gentleman, his neighbour.

"The natural consequence of this little adventure was, that Gaspard called on the ensuing morning to inquire respectfully after the health of his protégée. The young lady, whose beautiful face he now for the first time saw, thanked him, with modest blushes, for his services; but the old gentleman, who doted on his daughter, was more enthusiastic in his gratitude, and insisted on making Gaspard's better acquaintance.

"I need not tell you what all this ended in. You are both young, and can conceive the romance of life far better than I can describe it. Gaspard became gradually devoted to his heroine of the *bal masqué*, and she returned his passion with all the warmth and sincerity which might have been expected from a young creature hitherto brought up almost in total seclusion from society.

"Neither Gaspard nor Mademoiselle Le Beaume——"

"Good God!" exclaimed Annette—"my beautiful and unfortunate aunt! Oh! André Jacquot, say that this Gaspard lives, and I will seek him through the streets of Paris, that I may fall down and embrace his knees!"

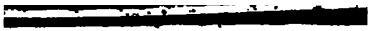
Adolphe was thunderstruck by this sudden outbreak; but the locksmith looked steadily at Annette, and said,

"Dear Mademoiselle, I must tell the tale now, or perhaps I *never* may. And I cannot tell it as it ought to be told, if you do not suppress your emotions."



THE BAL MASQUÉ.





"André! I am all ear,—but, oh! pardon me for one moment," she cried. "You know that poor Lucille was the mother of my infancy, and how often when a child I have wept over her as she was dying broken-hearted through her terrible anxiety for Gaspard Ferrete—her noble lover, and the saviour of her father!"

"Adolphe, fill the glasses," said the locksmith, as he turned his head to the window to conceal a few tears, which even he could not now suppress.

"I was going to say," continued the locksmith, "that neither Gaspard nor Mademoiselle Le Beaume knew any reason why the course of their true love should not run smoothly on into the gulf of matrimony. So great a favourite was Gaspard with M. Le Beaume——"

"Was he, then, the brother of the marquis?" most unseasonably interposed Adolphe.

Annette and the locksmith looked at each other.

"Pshaw!" said the locksmith, impatiently; "if first one, and then the other draw me in this way from the main story into a dozen episodes, I shall be as long over it as the Arabian queen was over her thousand and one tales. But, if I must answer categorically, you guess right, Master Renouard. M. Le Beaume was the brother of the marquis, who, on Gaspard's account, received you so kindly this morning."

Annette arose from her seat, and said, with an air of offended dignity,

"Master Jacquot, you should have told me of this."

"My dear Mademoiselle, you would have been told in due course all about our visit at your father's house, and by Master Renouard himself, had you not, woman-like, forestalled the revelation, by intruding into our company. Rest assured of this, Master Renouard does not respect La Comtesse Le Beaume more than he did the barmaid of this auberge."

Annette felt the force of the compliment, and holding out her hand, with charming candour, to Adolphe, begged the locksmith to proceed.

"Well, now that we all understand each other, I shall get on better," said the locksmith. "I was saying, neither Gaspard nor Lucille Le Beaume ever dreamed that there could be any objection to their union. Gaspard was wealthy, and respected by every one,—and by no one more than by M. Le Beaume himself. On such a perfect footing of friendship did he place himself with Gaspard, that whenever he could use Gaspard's influence—which was very great—in favour of another friend, he felt no scruple in doing so. So accustomed, indeed, had he become to Gaspard's society, that his absence, only for a day, made him fidgety; and Gaspard felt not the least doubt that the old gentleman would receive him in the character of a son-in-law with delight. Poor Lucille, too, fondly imagined that her father's happiness would be as much promoted by her union with Gaspard as her own."

"And what on earth could there be to prevent it?" exclaimed Adolphe.

"That," replied the locksmith, "which is tearing the heart of France into pieces at this moment—*the selfishness of class.* It was for some days a subject of pleasant *badinage* and flirtation between Gaspard and Lucille, as to which should have the pleasure of surprising the old gentleman by the announcement of their engagement. It was, however, ultimately settled between them that the thing should be done *comme il faut*, and that, instead of Gaspard dropping in during the evening as usual, he should send a note from next door to inform M. Le Beaume very pathetically that he felt his happiness so much compromised by the society of Mademoiselle Lucille, that unless he was permitted to enjoy it as that of his future wife, he should be compelled to banish himself from it altogether.

"Lucille, who knew the contents of the note, was making coffee

for her father when it was delivered to him; and she watched his mode of receiving it with the most pleasurable anticipations, dashed by a little sly roguery. She expected a little banter and a profusion of kisses, and sham reproaches about being tired of her old father, and all that sort of nonsense which young ladies look for on such occasions. Having read the note, however, M. Le Beaume said not a word, but rung the bell.

"'He is going,' thought Lucille, 'to send for Gaspard, join our hands, and give us his blessing. I wish it was over.'

"'Guillaume,' said the old gentleman to the servant, 'light the candles in the study, and come to me there in ten minutes.'

"'Dear me, what nonsense!' thought Lucille, as her father left the room without saying a word: 'there can be no necessity for writing.' Poor girl, she was impatient to be folded in the arms of her Gaspard.

"But a full hour had passed, and M. Le Beaume had not returned. Lucille rang the bell, and told Guillaume to remind M. Le Beaume that his coffee was getting cold.

"'M. Le Beaume has retired to bed, Mademoiselle,' replied the servant.

"'Good heavens! is he ill?' she exclaimed, a vague idea crossing her that *excess of joy* might have been too much for him, and she rushed up stairs to his bed-room. He was seated at his dressing table, with Gaspard's note before him.

"'Come in, Lucille. Do you know anything of this note?' he said, sternly.

"Lucille stammered out an affirmative.

"'Then *forget* it. No daughter of the loyal house of Le Beaume shall contaminate it by union with a pensioner of the *perfide*, the *ingrate* rebel and usurper, Louis Philippe. Not a word—we leave this house to-morrow.' And the sentence of eternal separation was carried into effect in twenty-four hours.

"I shall leave you to imagine all that was suffered by two

fond hearts, thus crushed by a cruel and senseless prejudice, and skip over a whole year of their mutual wretchedness and despair.

"You must understand, that until the event I am about to relate, I knew nothing of the real nature of Gaspard's official duties. While I was sitting one night here alone, Gaspard rushed into the room, and without preface exclaimed, after bolting the door—'Now, my friend, you shall know the cause of all my misery. Read *this!*'

"I could hardly believe my eyes. It was a letter which, three days before, M. Le Beaume had written to the Duchess de B—— with my dictation.

"'Where, in the name of God,' I cried, 'did you get *this?*'

"'From the SECRET OFFICE! Hate me! Spurn me! Spit upon me, André Jacquot—I am the SUPERIOR of that infernal inquisition!'

"The whole truth now flashed upon me. 'And my God,' I exclaimed, in agony for the fate of M. Le Beaume, 'you have reported this letter to the minister?'

"'No. No, André!' he exclaimed, throwing his arms up wildly. 'Do you think that I would not peril my *soul* for her happiness? Within half an hour I shall be buried alive—*alive*, mind you, so that I can still enjoy the remembrance of her!' and he fell forward on the floor.

"While I was endeavouring to arouse and comfort him, a *gendarme* stepped into the room, and bade Gaspard to follow him.

* * * * * *

Poor Gaspard had secreted the original letter of M. Le Beaume to the Duchess de B——, though the breach of trust was certain to be detected before the close of the day, because three copies were always taken of intercepted letters before the original reached his hands; his duty being merely to report on the contents, and enclose the original, with the report, for the minister, if important. He had time sufficient, nevertheless, to apprise

M. Le Beaume, who escaped. Gaspard's doom was solitary confinement at Vincennes for life; but about three years after he was released, it is supposed by mistake, under a general amnesty, on condition of sojourning for life within the commune of Autun, as a *forçat* under *surveillance*."

CHAPTER XXV.

"Poor Gaspard!" sighed Adolphe. "Perverse, indeed, has been thy fate; and it appears to have been so even from thy cradle!"

"And may I not say the same, Monsieur Adolphe," responded Annette, "of my unfortunate cousin? One would think that the stars which presided at their birth had, by a malignant conjunction, conspired to involve them in a common ruin."

"Nay, Mademoiselle," said the locksmith, with more feeling than he was wont, "neither they nor their stars were to blame. The evil influences which conspired to ruin them were the frailties of their parents. Had the elder Ferrete not too long delayed warning his son against accepting the succession to his office, Gaspard would never have accepted it; and, in all human probability, he and Mademoiselle Le Beaume would never have met: and had Monsieur Le Beaume's loyalty been tinctured with a little more prudence, he never would have needed the services of such a devoted friend as Gaspard proved himself to be."

"Will you forgive me," said Adolphe, "for asking what became of——"

"M. Le Beaume?" interposed the locksmith, frowning significantly at Adolphe. "He is still living, but has never been a happy man since the event I have been relating."

"No, no, Master Jacquot," said Annette, impatiently; for, even through her tears, she had not failed to remark the *ruse* by which the locksmith had kindly endeavoured to spare her feelings—"no, no, Monsieur Adolphe did not mean to ask of my father,

but of my cousin; and in justice to the living—for *he* has suffered more from the dreadful catastrophe than the dead could possibly have done—the *whole* truth should be told. The fate of my cousin is summed up in one word—LA MORGUE!"

"Horror of horrors!" exclaimed Adolphe. "Good God! what must have been Gaspard's feelings when such tidings met him upon his return into the world! I wonder no longer at his apparent misanthropy now."

"Well," said the locksmith, "let us drop the subject for the present. There are some things belonging to the past which it is impossible to recall, and life and lost honour are in this catalogue of despair."

"Too true," rejoined Annette; "and I do not wish to prolong the conversation. Can I serve you with anything, Master Jacquot?"

"Why, yes," answered the locksmith. "You may bring another bottle of wine when La Bruyère comes in, as I expect he will in about a quarter of an hour."

"Then *au revoir* for the present," said Annette, and she left the room.

"There is a reflection you made just now," observed Adolphe, "which I do not at all comprehend. I allude to your remarking that there are two things which are irreparable—loss of life and loss of honour. Now, I cannot see from your narrative that our friend Gaspard, during the whole of his eventful career, has suffered any loss of honour."

"I spoke generally," answered the locksmith, "and never meant that Gaspard had ever suffered any loss of honour *morally*. But has he not done so in the eyes of the world? Must he not have done so even in his own? Is it nothing, instead of being a respectable independent member of society, to be a *forçat* under surveillance? Is it nothing for a man to feel this, and that the stain, though unjustly inflicted, is indelible?"

"You reason truly," returned Adolphe. "But oh! what torment and vexation of soul it must be to feel this? The slightest stain inflicted upon us by an individual, we risk our lives to wash out in the life-blood of the wronger; but poor Gaspard, alas! has not even the privilege of murmuring against those whose oppression has reduced him, in the eyes of the world, to the lowest abyss of infamy! How he endures it I know not."

"How!" exclaimed the locksmith, with impetuosity; "why, as all brave men endure a wrong—with the hope of redress, of revenge! Cowards only seek a relief from wrong at the hands of the powerful in a voluntary grave. Had Gaspard been such, he would long ago have only sought to have been laid on the same bier as his loved and lost Emilie—the show-table of the *Morgue!* But, no—he has sworn not to meet her, even in the next world, with the brand of the *forçat* upon him, but to live for the destruction of those with whose existence his character of a *forçat* will cease. Do you blame him?"

"By heavens, I do not!" returned Adolphe, with equal energy. "It is a noble resolution, worthy of a man who has already so nobly sacrificed all for the happiness of those he loved. And if there were no other reason for my wishing success to the cause in which he has embarked, I would pray, fight, die for it."

"Spoken as becomes a pupil of Gaspard Ferrete," said the locksmith, warmly shaking Adolphe by the hand. "Pledge me to that cause—to the downfall of the oppressors of Gaspard Ferrete."

"I do," returned the youth. "To the downfall of the oppressors of Gaspard Ferrete;" and he drained a bumper, while the locksmith did the same.

"And now," said Adolphe, "with me there is no reflecting, no turning back. I will forget all the pledges of the past, all the hopes of the future, until this cause either fails or succeeds."

"A manly resolution," rejoined the locksmith, "which few

would have courage to make, and still fewer have the courage to keep,—though of you I have no more doubt than I have of Gaspard Ferrete or myself. But one more glass, and we will then speak of our expedition of to-night."

The libation having been performed, the locksmith commenced as follows:—

"You have seen something of our trade clubs in the Rue Vingt-un, and you have also seen something of our Social and Communist clubs in the *Salle des Concerts* in the Boulevards. These alone are sufficient sources of anxiety to the government, but they are far from being the most formidable to it, for they only serve as stalking-horses to divert its attention from others which are infinitely more dangerous. Did you ever hear a rumour of there existing in Paris societies called *secret*?"

"Yes," replied Adolphe; "but I have always understood that they are mere political clubs, which adopt the plan of having no regular place of meeting in order that they may avoid interruption by the police, and prosecution by the government for words which the members may utter there."

"Yes," continued the locksmith, "this is the general impression: it is even the impression of the government, who, so far from thinking seriously about them, regards their hole-and-corner mode of proceeding a proof of their weakness and insignificance. But the case is very different. These societies have their regular places of meeting, their regular officials, their regular tribunals, their regular judges, their regular police; and, in short, an organization almost as perfect, though not so extensively ramified, as that of the *Holy Vehme* itself. In one important particular, however, they differ essentially from that dreadful institution. The *Holy Vehme* arrogated to themselves the power of visiting justice upon all persons indifferently, whereas our secret societies only affect jurisdiction over their own members, and not even over them, except as far as their conduct is concerned *as* members."

"That, indeed, is a most material difference," observed Adolphe. "I have read of the *Holy Vehme*, that they did not spare even nobles and kings; that even these trembled at its denunciations, and submitted to its commands."

"To some extent, this is true," rejoined the locksmith; "and indeed kings and nobles were the chief parties they prosecuted, for the *Holy Vehme* was, in reality, a sort of self-erected Inquisition of lovers of justice, who saw, in those times, that it was by terror alone that royal and feudal oppression could be repressed. But the objects of our secret societies are purely political. They are, in fact, the mainsprings of all the organization that has been going on for several years to upset the domination of the bourgeoisie, and in the end their voice will give the watchword for the struggle when the good day comes for it. They do not stick a dagger in Louis Philippe's chamber-door, and summon him, by the dagger and cord, to answer for his offences against the working classes; but they keep a very strict account of his doings, and will call him to a very sharp reckoning for them some night, when he is little dreaming of such a visit as they will pay him in person, with a hundred thousand voices to second their order for him to quit."

"And what are the duties which these societies exact from their members?" asked Adolphe.

"Nothing but obedience and fidelity," answered the locksmith. "Whatever the tribunals require them to do, they must do; and they must keep secret not only the transactions of the society to which they belong, but even its existence. And if they fail in either of these duties, the consequences are extreme."

"I should not like to bind myself to the first condition," interposed Adolphe; "the tribunal might require me to murder my father or my mother."

"But the members," answered the locksmith, "take the oath with a guarantee that they shall not be required to commit

assassination, or robbery, or any purely *moral* crime; and *political* crimes, you are well aware, are only crimes in the eyes of those who differ from the political principles of those who commit them. The private assassination of a bourgeois would be a moral crime —in fact, murder; but if you were to kill a bourgeois in a pitched battle for your rights, no casuist in the world would call *that* a moral crime."

"I perfectly see the distinction," said Adolphe; "and what you mean is, I suppose, that these secret societies will not take vengeance for the oppression of the government, or a class, by secret and individual outrages; but that, when they think proper to put themselves openly in battle array for their rights, then, the fight being a fair one, and about a fairly debateable point, whatever blood may be shed in the struggle, cannot be implied to them as a moral crime, any more than the shedding of blood on either side is a moral crime in an ordinary field of battle."

"Exactly so," replied the locksmith. "And there is only one exception with us to this rule, against punishing a wrong by privately avenging it."

"And what can *that* be?" asked Adolphe, somewhat surprised, for he could not conceive any possible exception, which could be a justifiable one.

"It is," answered the locksmith, slowly and solemnly, "in the case of a man who turns traitor; and, as he would sacrifice the lives of the whole society, the taking of his life is only a justifiable act of self-defence."

"And does this frequently happen?" asked Adolphe.

"It has only happened twice," returned the locksmith; "and in both cases, the men turned out to be predetermined spies, who ran the risk with their eyes open."

"But they must have done the mischief before you could discover their treachery," said Adolphe; "and how, therefore, did

the society escape suspicion of having been the authors of the doom which they had suffered?"

"They never reached the Prefecture of police," returned the locksmith. "*Our* police is so perfect, that their premeditated treason was discovered before they were two hundred yards from the tribunal whose secrets, five minutes before, they had sworn, by the most solemn of oaths, religiously to preserve."

"These are, indeed, singular and fearful institutions," observed Adolphe, seriously.

"It is to one of them that I am going to introduce you this evening," rejoined the locksmith.

"I think," said Adolphe, shrugging his shoulders, "that I would rather decline paying the visit."

"And why?" asked the locksmith.

"Because," replied Adolphe, "though I am staunch to the cause we have been speaking of as an oak to its roots, I still should not like to become a member of one of these societies."

"And who said you were going to enrol yourself as a member?" again asked the locksmith. "*I* certainly did not, though I should like to see you become one. The tribunal will not only tell you that it is perfectly optional, but they will beseech you not, for the society's sake and your own, to become a member, unless you feel that you have the firmness of purpose to abide by the obligations you will incur."

"And what if a man, who has been introduced," said Adolphe, "should refuse to become a member, and afterwards betray what he has seen and heard?"

"He would, of course, be treated as a spy," returned the locksmith.

"And very justly so, I admit," said Adolphe. "Well; on this condition, I alter my mind, and will attend you this evening."

"Good," rejoined the locksmith; "and in another hour you must prepare for a rather long journey."

"How much time will it occupy?" inquired Adolphe.

"An hour and a half, and sharp driving," replied the locksmith.

"Then it must be a dozen miles or more from hence," observed Adolphe.

"Not many hundred yards," returned the locksmith, with a mysterious smile; "and yet, to reach it by the most direct route, it will occupy the time I mention. And there is another thing,—you must go from the room blindfold."

"I do not like that, I confess," muttered Adolphe; "but still, I will not object, if you go with me."

"No, I cannot; you must ride alone," said the locksmith, peremptorily; "but I will answer for your perfect safety. In fact, I will be within three yards of you throughout your journey, and we will travel back by the same conveyance."

"Agreed then," said Adolphe.

"Hark!" said the locksmith. "I hear La Bruyère below, and must give him a word of instruction before he comes up."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE locksmith soon returned with La Bruyère, the latter bringing his bottle and glass with him.

"I forgot to ask, La Bruyère," said the locksmith, "whether you have been to the *gargotier*, in the City?"

"Yes," replied La Bruyère, "and he will be with you in *la cité des Têtes* exactly at the time appointed."

"That is well," rejoined the locksmith, "for I fear that we shall want him. On this occasion, however, I think we may safely dispense with the *dernier ressort*. A few hours' detention in *la cité des Têtes* may answer every purpose, and I think that we had better leave the *détenu* in your charge, La Bruyère."

"Have you any reason then to expect an intruder to-night?" asked La Bruyère, with evident surprise. "*Pauvre diable!* If you let me know who he is, I would in charity go and advise him to settle all his accounts, and have a short interview with his confessor, before he sets out on such an errand."

"No, I tell you, La Bruyère," reiterated the locksmith, "the *dernier ressort* will not be necessary in this case; we need only detain him as a guest for a short time, and you, as we of the *compagnonnage* say, shall be *la mère* to him. But how about La Mitraille, our brave grenadier? Has he made his report?"

"Yes," replied La Bruyère, "here it is." La Bruyère handed a paper to the locksmith, which, to Adolphe, appeared to be something like the ground-plan of a town. The locksmith studied it intently for some time, now tracing the lines which traversed

it with the forefinger of his right hand, and now measuring the distances with the thumb and little finger of his left (which he made to serve the purpose of a pair of compasses), and then making notes on the back of the document with a pencil. Having finished his examination and comments, he placed the paper in his pocket, and desired La Bruyère to go and bring La Mitraille to him directly. Bruyère, without a word, left the apartment like a shot.

"While La Bruyère is gone for ten minutes," said the locksmith to Adolphe, "I will take the opportunity of explaining to you who La Mitraille is, and what is the nature of the document which he has forwarded to me. La Mitraille—which is only his *nom de guerre* on the present service, his real name is *Piotte*—served for about twelve years in the Imperial armies, and having had the good fortune to belong to the Grenadiers, was always campaigning with the Emperor. Now what made the French armies always believe themselves invincible—and until the first reverses in the Russian expedition, the belief made them so—was that they considered *le petit caporal* such a consummate master of the art of war, that under no disadvantage of position or numbers was it possible for him to be worsted. In winter quarters the common soldiers would study the plan of preceding campaigns, retrace every step and counter-step of the Emperor upon the maps, with the view of being able to admire, as they would wish to do, the bold and masterly manœuvres by which he had led them to victory. From this cause it arose that there were few soldiers who served in the armies immediately under the Emperor, who did not acquire such a knowledge of strategy as would have made them no indifferent commanders themselves. From this cause (in part at least)—from constantly contemplating the genius of their chief—the soldiers almost adored him as something superhuman.

"La Mitraille, as I have said, was one of these, and his distin-

guishing features—for one who never was promoted to a higher rank than *sous-lieutenant*—are an inextinguishable attachment to the very *name* of Napoleon, and a considerable measure of strategetical skill. You need not wonder, therefore, that after having sighed in vain for the advent of the Duke of Reichstadt, he should, as a matter of course, transfer his hereditary allegiance to the next Napoleon in succession. Hence he is with us in the attempt we are about to make to remove Louis Philippe out of the way; and, though he has not the brightest genius for plotting, he has been of amazing assistance to us in marking out our plan of campaign. This" (taking the paper from his pocket) "is his ground-work of our operations. The point we are to carry is the Tuileries, and he suggests that we march on it from two different *points-d'appui*, the Rue St. Jaques, and the Place de la Bastille. He has been busy for some days in measuring distances, and surveying, so as to enable us, by judiciously placed barricades, to keep up our communications, and prevent the basis of our operations being cut off from us. I have no doubt that he has done all this with skill; but there is one thing he has forgotten."

"You must have a keen eye to detect a military oversight in the plans of an experienced soldier like La Mitraille," observed Adolphe.

"Pshaw!" replied the locksmith. "A man may study and practise the art of war all his life, and never become a great commander like Napoleon, unless, like him, he has that same keen eye, which can detect at a glance when his subordinates or his enemies have omitted any material point in their calculations. If more battles have been lost from one cause rather than any other, it has been from generals miscalculating the *time* in which large masses of men can be deployed on a field at a given distance from the starting point of their march; and their errors have uniformly arisen, not from their mistaking the distance, but from their not duly taking into account the breadth of the

channels, if I may so say, through which their armies are to be poured into the destined field."

"And you conceive that La Mitraille has committed an oversight of this kind?" observed Adolphe.

"Yes," replied the locksmith. "In a certain event, a body of men, at a given signal, are to leave a point on the left bank of the river, cross, and deploy before the Tuileries. Another body, at the same time, are to reach the same place from the Boulevard. Now, La Mitraille has measured the distances correctly, and also made the proper allowance for the rate of march. But he has not calculated how long it will take for the men to deploy after passing the bridge. This, of course, will depend on the breadth of the bridge, and the time of deploying the men on the other side will depend upon the breadth of the street from which they are to emerge."

"I understand you perfectly," said Adolphe, "and it is well that your sagacity beforehand has prevented the action of these two bodies from being disjointed instead of simultaneous."

At this moment La Bruyère returned with La Mitraille.

The latter was a fine-looking military man, apparently about sixty years of age. His height was upwards of six feet, and his erect carriage gave you the impression of his being still taller. His hair and mustaches were becoming something of the badger complexion, but his hazel eyes had lost none of their fire. His close-buttoned frock coat showed off his ample chest to advantage, and, altogether, you would have pronounced him, for his age, not only a fine, but handsome man, had it not been for an enormous *dimple* in his left cheek, the cicatrix of a wound he had received from a shot, and which had caused him to receive, among his own messmates, the *sobriquet* of La Mitraille.

"A thousand welcomes, my gallant La Mitraille," said the locksmith, warmly shaking the veteran by the hand. "We are once more on the eve of the good day at last."

"It cannot come too soon for me," returned La Mitraille.

"Nor for me—nor for any of us, I hope," rejoined the locksmith. "But, before we think about business, *let us say our prayers.* La Bruyère, fill the glasses; bumpers——"

La Bruyère did as he was ordered.

"Now, gentlemen," continued the locksmith, "I will be precentor for the occasion; and do you all devoutly follow me. A BAS LOUIS PHILIPPE!"

"A BAS LOUIS PHILIPPE!" responded the others; and then drank off their glasses slowly and in silence.

"And now, be seated, all," said the locksmith. "La Mitraille, let me introduce to you across the table a gallant young spirit, Monsieur Adolphe Renouard."

"With such a recommendation, Monsieur Adolphe Renouard, I have pleasure in making your acquaintance," said La Mitraille.

"And now, I suppose that all our eagles are ready to be on the wing, and swoop down on the villanous bourgeoisie?" said the locksmith.

"Show them their quarry, Master Jacquot," said La Mitraille, "and you will see how they will strike it down."

"I doubt them not," quoth the locksmith. "*You*, La Mitraille, will head them, of course?"

"They elected me last night," returned the veteran, modestly; "a compliment they must have paid to my years—for there are few among them who are not better men, both head and hand."

"They know you far better than you know yourself, it seems," rejoined the locksmith; "and, for my part, I both thank and praise them for electing my friend La Mitraille. I would say more, but we have no time for compliments; and I trust we soon shall have plenty, not only for compliments but congratulations. Now, as to your plan: it is admirable. Had we had your head with us in 1832, little as you think of it, it would have saved us the trouble of having our work to do over again. I concur

with it on every point. I have, however, made one or two short observations on the back of it, which perhaps you will peruse at your leisure."

"With yourleave, gentlemen," said La Mitraille, as he took the document from the locksmith, and began to peruse the notes of the latter at once.

When he raised his head, the veteran's face was suffused with an ingenuous blush.

"*Sacré Dieu,* Mr. Locksmith," he exclaimed. "I would not have presented such a plan as this to *le petit caporal* for all the silver in the Bank of France; and I hope we shall find the amount to be considerable in a few days. I owe you eternal gratitude, for these hints have saved my reputation, and perhaps the lives of ten thousand men."

"Say no more, my dear La Mitraille," continued the locksmith. "*Le petit caporal,* on a similar occasion, would have displayed the same greatness of soul as yourself. Weaker minds would have taken offence. And now, one more glass, for I have a rendezvous to answer at some distance, and in a short time."

The glasses were once more filled, and drained; and after a short private conversation between the locksmith and La Mitraille, the latter departed.

"Are you ready?" said the locksmith to Adolphe.

"Perfectly," replied the other.

"Then, La Bruyère, go down and see if this gentleman's carriage is at the door," continued the locksmith; and La Bruyère left the room.

The locksmith then took a large red silk shawl from his pocket, which had several strings of the same colour at each end, and intimated to Adolphe that it was time for him to be bandaged. Whatever Adolphe really felt, he disdained to show the least trepidation or hesitation, and submitted to be bandaged at once. The locksmith then told him to come from the table into the

middle of the room, and having led him there, turned him round several times each way.

"Now, let us go," said the locksmith; and conducted him into the street. After walking a few paces, the locksmith whispered to Adolphe that the carriage was close to him, and, assisting him into the vehicle, ordered it to be driven on.

At first, the unusual sensation of being blindfold, rather confused Adolphe; for the bandage had not only effectually deprived him of the use of his eyes, but, in a great measure, of his ears too. His first determination was, that he would not *think* at all, until he arrived at the mysterious scene he was about to witness; but he found that to banish thought was a metaphysical feat far beyond his powers of volition. The first reflection which he could not avoid was, that he had been blindfolded in the club-room, and from thence led by the locksmith into the street. But, to descend from the club-room into the common room, there was a short flight of stairs, and he was quite positive that he had not descended one step at all; but that, on the contrary, he had been marched from the room into the carriage on perfectly level ground. After hammering his brains for some time in vain for an explanation of this subject, he resolved to wait for it from the locksmith himself; and thinking of the locksmith put him in mind of the latter's assurance that he would not be three yards from him during the journey.

"If so," he thought, "I should hear a carriage or a horse accompanying us; but, though I can hear many carriages and horses passing and re-passing us, I cannot detect the slightest sign of one being continuously either before us or behind us, or by the side of us, at so short a distance as three yards."

At last, however, he said to himself again, in despair,—

"The locksmith will, no doubt, explain this, too, hereafter."

After continuing these sort of reveries for more than an hour, Adolphe perceived, by the more easy motion of the carriage, that

it was rolling over a far smoother road; soon, however, it was again rumbling on the stones; and, in another half-hour, he was driven into what he conjectured, from certain familiar sounds, to be a farm-yard. Here the horses were pulled up. In an instant, the door was opened, and he was ordered by a strange voice to step out. A person on each side of the door assisted him to do so; and when he had descended they bound his arms behind him, and led him forward without uttering a single word.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ADOLPHE was first conducted up the staircase of a house, and (as he supposed) after his guides had turned him round several times both ways, as the locksmith had done, down again. Then he was led up the same or another flight of stairs, made to perform the same gyrations and the same descent; and this operation having been performed four times, he was conducted, as he thought, down into a cellar, and thence through a door (for he heard a bolt drawn) down another flight of steps, into what he imagined, from the rush of cold air, must be a subterranean vault. After traversing this for several hundred yards, he felt, even through the thick bandage, a sensation of light. His conductors here arrested his steps.

In a moment the cord which bound his arms was cut, and a voice said—"Adolphe Renouard, do you see anything?"

"I feel," said Adolphe, boldly, "as if I was again in the light of the sun, but I see nothing."

"Then behold!" said the same voice, and the strings having been cut, the bandage fell from his eyes.

At first, so weak was Adolphe's vision from his eyes having been so long bandaged, and so intense and glaring was the light, that he still could see nothing. He rather felt as if he had been struck altogether blind. By degrees, however, objects began to be perceptible, and when he could distinctly make out the *tableau* before him, he could scarcely believe in the terrible reality.

It seemed to him that he was in a long hall, the end of which facing him was terminated by a wall hung with bright red drapery, upon which there was the hideous device of a crown, surmounted by a death's head and cross-bones. Immediately under this wall there was a raised platform, upon which several figures were sitting behind a table, all wearing black masks, and habited in robes of the same bright red cloth as the hangings of the wall. The table was also covered by a drooping cloth of the same colour, and on it, before the person who sat in the centre, and a little higher than the rest, was placed a real crown surmounted by a real human skull and thigh bones.

For more than a minute Adolphe's eyes were riveted on this extraordinary part of the spectacle, and when he, at last, allowed them to wander from it to the sides of the hall, a sight met them which shocked and bewildered him still more. The walls seemed to be formed of panels of the same flaming cloth, the intervals between them being filled up with columns of human heads, which grinned horribly at the spectators, by the light of small red flames issuing from their eyeless sockets. Adolphe shuddered at this hideous mockery of humanity, and turned, for relief, towards the other end of the hall. But what was his astonishment when he could perceive nothing but the light fade gradually away, which raised the gloomy idea in his excited indignation that, if in that direction wall there was, it must be *a wall of solid darkness.*

On again turning round, he observed that, at the table and on the platform, and beside the chief actors in red robes, there sat two or three others in *red* masks and black cloaks, and who appeared to be performing the functions of secretaries. Below the platform were several other mute and motionless figures, whose masks and robes were both red, and whom Adolphe did not err in supposing to be the officials of the tribunal above; and ranged on seats by the side walls, were a number of persons all plainly dressed, like himself.

So busily was Adolphe engaged in contemplating this scene, that for more than ten minutes he did not observe that there were several persons around him to whom it was as much a novelty as to himself. Their countenances betrayed various emotions of curiosity, surprise, and awe; but there was one person in particular standing next to Adolphe, whose pale cheeks were rendered so ghastly livid from the effect of the red lights, that Adolphe recoiled from him with a feeling of something between disgust and affright.

Adolphe narrowly scanned the rows of the plainly dressed persons on the benches by the side walls, in search of the locksmith, but he could not detect him amongst them.

At length the silence was broken. The president, taking one of the cross-bones which surmounted the crown before him, struck the table three times, and one of the officials proclaimed, "The president speaks!"

"CONFRÉRES DE LA ROUGE," said the president, rising, and Adolphe, who expected to hear him address the assemblage in an austere and ill-omened tone, was agreeably disappointed to find that it was as familiar and courteous as the tone in which the president of any ordinary society would address his brother members, —"*Confrères de la Rouge*—The tribunal has much important business to transact to-night—for you are aware that we have little time left to make our final preparation for the celebration of *le bon jour;* but the most important at all times is to strengthen ourselves by an accession of new members to our fraternity. I find several names inscribed in the book of candidates, and their sponsors will be called upon to introduce them, in rotation, as they stand there."

"Who—sponsor—Pierre Lafont," said the same official, who seemed to act as usher of the court.

"I," answered a voice from the benches on the left.

"Then let Pierre Lafont come forward," proclaimed the usher.

Adolphe was surprised to observe that this Pierre Lafont was the identical man from whose repulsively livid countenance he had recoiled a few minutes before. Adolphe also could remark that the summons rendered it still more ghastly; and that, as he advanced with slow and wavering gait up the hall, he exhibited all the appearance of a man taking his last few steps to the scaffold.

"Pierre Lafont," said the president, with much suavity, as if to reassure him (and doubtless he had seen many incipient novices as much agitated by the scene)—"Pierre Lafont, you are welcome amongst us. In desiring to become a member of this society, you exhibit the ambition and patriotism of a true Frenchman, and I doubt not that you will prove yourself worthy of our fraternization. It is a generous maxim, however, of this society, that no man shall enter it without being fully made aware of the nature of the service expected from him; and, therefore, it is my duty, as its unworthy president, candidly to inform you of the duties and obligations you will incur. The first is, never to divulge the transactions or existence of the society to anyone—not even to your own wife; and the second is, that you will faithfully and zealously execute any command of this tribunal not inconsistent with your other *moral* duties to society. If you accept these conditions, we will, with pleasure, accept you; but if you think that you have not firmness enough to fulfil them, you will be allowed to depart in safety, after having sworn not to reveal what you have heard and seen this night. Do you accept them?"

"I do," answered the trembling candidate.

"Then read to him the oath," said the President to the usher; "and if he then still accepts the conditions, administer it to him, and he at once becomes a member of *la Société Rouge*."

The usher read, in a loud voice, as follows:—

"I, Pierre Lafont, by my honour as a man, by my good faith as

a Frenchman, by my body, and by my soul, swear that I will be a true and faithful member of this society; that I place my life in pledge with this tribunal for the same; and that I confess that it will be justly become forfeit to this tribunal the instant that I reveal the proceedings or existence of this society to any party or parties whatsoever, even to the bone of my bone, or to the offspring of my loins. And by the same gages I swear, that I will faithfully and zealously execute all the commands of this tribunal, which are not inconsistent with my other moral duties to society."

After the reading of this oath, the president remained seated for about a minute, as if to give the candidate time for consideration; but, in reality, that the tribunal might well observe the effect of it upon him. Adolphe could not see his countenance; but he could perceive, from the trembling of his legs, that he was violently agitated.

"Pierre Lafont," said the president, rising, "let me assure you that the uneasiness under which you manifestly labour is quite uncalled for. If, after having heard the oath read, as an honest man you doubt your firmness to observe it, a declaration to that effect will be no offence to this tribunal. The tribunal, on the contrary, will admire your candour, and you will be at liberty to depart as you came, after having sworn not to divulge what you have heard and seen in this place. Do you now *accept* our conditions of membership?"

The wretch hesitated, and was silent.

"I must repeat the question in another form," said the president. "Do you *decline* our conditions of membership?"

"I would rather——"

He was evidently going to stammer out something else; but the president, in a tone even of commiseration, cut him short:

"You would rather *decline*," he said; "and, for my part, I applaud a man who, like you, has the resolution to refuse an

oath which he feels he has not the resolution to observe. It shows that you estimate an oath at its proper sanctity and weight. It now only remains that you take the oath of secrecy as to the secrets you have, by *your own desire*, become acquainted with this night, and you shall be conducted in safety hence. Let that oath be administered to Pierre Lafont."

"Pierre Lafont," said the usher, "attend, and repeat after me."

The reading and the responses ran thus :—

"I, Pierre Lafont,"

"*I, Pierre Lafont,*"

"By my honour as a man,"

"*By my honour as a man,*"

"By my loyalty as a Frenchman,"

"*By my loyalty as a Frenchman,*"

"By my body and by my soul,"

"*By my body and by my soul,*"

"Swear that I will never divulge,"

"*Swear that I will never divulge,*"

"What I have heard or seen this night,"

"*What I have heard or seen this night,*"

"To any party or parties whatsoever;"

"*To any party or parties whatsoever;*"

"Not even to bone of my bone,"

"*Not even to bone of my bone,*"

"Nor to the offspring of my loins;"

"*Nor to the offspring of my loins;*"

"And by the same gages I swear,"

"*And by the same gages I swear,*"

"That I came not here for such purpose;"

"*That I came not here for such purpose;*"

"And that my life is justly forfeit,"

"*And that my life is justly forfeit,*"

"As a spy and a traitor,"

"*As a spy and a traitor,*"

"If any one here present,"

"*If any one here present,*"

"Can prove to the contrary.'"

"*Can prove to the contrary.*"

The miserable man went through the responses after the usher, mechanically, and, as soon as they were concluded, turned round, as if he would retreat into the furthest darkness of the hall. His face was streaming with perspiration, and his eyes glared like those of a hunted fox at his last gasp for life. But the tribunal had not yet done with him.

"Pierre Lafont," vociferated the president, in a tone so altered that it almost made Adolphe start from his feet. "*Pierre Lafont,* remain where you are! It has still to be ascertained whether you have sworn truly or falsely; whether any one here present can prove that you came here as a spy, and intended to depart as a traitor. Let the proclamation be made."

"If any one here present," proclaimed the usher, "can prove that Pierre Lafont came here as a spy, and intended to depart as a traitor, let him speak."

"I CAN," responded a voice from the benches on the right.

The delinquent turned round in the direction from which the voice came, and the moment he saw who was his accuser, he uttered a cry like that of a steed who finds himself within the folds of a boa constrictor, and fell flat on the floor.

Adolphe instantaneously turned his eyes in the direction, to see who could be the dreaded object which had produced such an effect upon the wretched creature—

IT WAS THE AGENT!



THE AGENT DENOUNCING LAFONT IN THE HALL OF THE SOCIÉTÉ ROUGE.

"Take him away," said the president, resuming his usual placid tone.

Two officials bound him as he lay, and lifting him up, more dead than alive, disappeared with him through one of the cloth panels in the side walls we have already described.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER the scene detailed in the last chapter, the routine business of swearing in new members went on rapidly and smoothly, as if nothing extraordinary had happened. At last the list of candidates was nearly exhausted, Adolphe being left with a solitary companion—for the new members immediately took their seats—when his own name was called.

Though Adolphe was not altogether surprised at this, yet it was certainly something more than he had bargained for, and for a moment he hesitated as to what course to pursue. However, he stepped boldly up to the platform, thinking to make up his mind while the president was going through the address, which he himself had ere this learned by heart. But there was some delay in his case—there appeared to be something irregular in it; when at last the president inquired who was sponsor for Adolphe, as his name was omitted in the sponsor's margin of the candidate's book.

"Who is sponsor for Adolphe Renouard?" inquired the president.

"I am," answered one of the masked members of the tribunal.

Some sensation was created by this announcement, for it was only in the case of candidates of distinction that the members of the tribunal themselves undertook the office of sponsors. In ordinary cases, when nominations fell into their hands, they devolved the office of sponsorship on the officials; and the members therefore wondered who this evidently raw youth from the pro-

vinces could be, that he was honoured by the sponsorship from the circle of the tribunal.

Adolphe, however, knew the voice to be the voice of the locksmith, and his course was decided.

The president complimented him on having such a high guarantee for his fidelity and zeal to the cause, and then, after going through the usual premonitory remarks, asked him if he was ready to accept the society's conditions of membership.

"I am," replied Adolphe, firmly but modestly.

"Then let the oath be read," said the president.

"It is quite unnecessary, Mr. President," interposed Adolphe. "I have listened to it so often, and so attentively, that its substance and spirit are engraved, not only upon my memory, but upon my heart. I am ready to take it!"

"Spoken like the pupil and avenger of Gaspard Ferrete," exclaimed his masked sponsor.

"Spoken," added the president, "as we will all speak to Louis Philippe before we are many days older."

Adolphe took the oath and his seat, and behold him a member of the *Société Rouge!*

There now only remained another member to be enrolled, and that ceremony having been performed without any further hesitation in the proceedings, the President declared the ordinary meeting to be at an end. He informed them, however, that a committee of the tribunal would be sitting all night to receive reports from, and issue instructions to, the Committee of Trades at the Rue des Vingt-un, who would then be in communication with the respective clubs which they represented. Finally, he exhorted them all to be not only watchful, but to guard against marring the effect of the explosion by any premature or desultory flashes of ill-timed enthusiasm, which might alarm their enemies, and render the victory, though not less certain, more difficult and sanguinary.

After this brief address, the members in the body of the hall (if it may be so called) quickly but silently disappeared; some through the curtained outlets on either side, and others in the gloom of the long avenue, by which Adolphe supposed that he had been conducted into the *penetralia* of the society. Left alone, without a guide or instructions, he began to feel somewhat embarrassed, when he felt a tap on his shoulder, and, turning round, found André Jacquot at his side.

"Come," said the locksmith, "the business of the night is over here—for us at least; and I confess that even I do not desire to remain in this dismal place longer than is necessary."

"Dismal!" returned Adolphe: "it is hideous; one might imagine, from the ghastly furniture and horrible emblems around, that the society had taxed its ingenuity to find the most disgusting mode possible of inspiring its noviciates with a contempt for death."

"Pshaw," replied the locksmith, "except in the matter of the lights and red cloth, a table, and a few seats, the society found the place ready furnished to their hands. To be sure the furniture of the walls and pillars is rather antique, but I'll answer for it that all the sculptors and carvers in the world could not equal it. There are here millions of little pieces of *vertu*, the like to which no Canova or Thorwaldsen could produce, though they should mould and chisel until they were blind. But *allons*, we will make our exit by the next *street*, which is lighted throughout."

Adolphe followed the locksmith through one of the draperied interstices, and was surprised at the enormous thickness of the parietal buttresses which supported the roof of this enormous suite of subterranean galleries. That in which he now found himself ran parallel to the other, and was dimly illuminated by oil lamps placed at considerable intervals, but which still afforded sufficient light to show him that it was fitted up throughout with the same loathsome remains of humanity as the one he had just quitted."

"You call these sombre galleries *streets*," observed Adolphe; "and surely a city, in every street of which such myriads of heads may be counted, must have a name."

"You are right," returned the locksmith. "This is what a biblical classic would call the modern Golgotha, or Place of Skulls; but, to eschew all profaneness, we who have appropriated it give it the name of *La Cité des Têtes;* and, loathsome as it is, you would think the atmosphere of it purity itself compared with that *Cité* above ground, if you knew the latter as well as I do."

"In short, then," said Adolphe, "we are now in the catacombs of Paris."

"Exactly so," returned the locksmith, "and a fitting place for such a conspiracy as ours: is it not?"

"Appropriate enough, in all reason," answered Adolphe; "though I wonder that you should risk such a long line of lights, affording the enemy a clue to the labyrinth which leads to the council chamber of the conspirators."

"There is little to fear on that score," said the locksmith. "There is no known entrance to the catacombs within a long distance from the spot which we have chosen for our *Salle Rouge*, and he must be a bold fellow indeed who would venture so far to explore them. It would be no easy matter for him to find his way out again."

"The distance from the place where I entered to your *Salle Rouge*, as you call it," observed Adolphe, "did not seem, as far as I could judge with my eyes shut, to exceed a few hundred yards."

"And your judgment did not deceive you," returned the locksmith. You entered the catacombs by stairs worked in a shaft, which we have sunk into them ourselves, from a cellar in the very heart of the faubourg—at no great distance, indeed, from the domicile where you are sojourning."

"My long journey, then, to the place of rendezvous," said Adolphe, "was all a mystification?"

"You know," replied the locksmith, "how necessary it is that we should take every precaution against treachery; and, as we make it a point of honour to send back every one to the place from whence he came, in safety, who may shrink from the pledges we require, we have taken care that those who decline enrolment after having been initiated half-way into our secrets, shall not know how to direct others to the spot which they have been once permitted to visit. Most of the recusants have undoubtedly recognised that our secret conclave is held within the bowels of the catacombs; but of the latitude and longitude of the spot they cannot possibly form a conjecture; and if the police, or even the military, were sent to scour these funereal galleries, we should have plenty of time to defeat the chance of their making any discovery. But let us cross the avenue which we left, for we are now within a few yards of the shaft which is again to conduct us to upper air."

The locksmith was too familiar with this dark retreat to experience any difficulty in finding the ladder by which Adolphe had descended into it. After mounting it, they crawled up the steep and rounding flight of steps with which the shaft was ribbed, and after much toil, (and in Adolphe's case, not a little danger) they found themselves on the floor of the cellar. Here they were no longer in darkness, for some one had left a lamp ready for their use. The locksmith took it up, and led the way. When they reached the ground floor, Adolphe found himself once more amongst the living. There were several apartments on this floor, the inhabitants of which were all on the stir, amidst their usual domestic occupation, and who took no further notice of the locksmith than offering him as he passed each door a *bon jour*—an odd salutation, certainly, as it was now several hours past sunset. On reaching the first floor of the house, the locksmith suddenly stopped.

"I would have you," he said, "mark well, Master Renouard,

the route by which you are returning, because it will give you some notion of our insurrectionary tactics in Paris."

He then led the way along a landing, or corridor, into which apartments opened from either side, and at length, passing through a doorway on the left, they found themselves in a room which was apparently occupied by a single tenant,—a weaver, who was busy at his loom.

"*Bon jour*," said the locksmith.

"*Bon jour*," replied the weaver, who seemed quite indifferent to this unceremonious visit.

Nor did the locksmith take any further notice of the toiling operative; but straightway crossed the room to a door, which apparently led into a cupboard or closet. On entering this little recess with Adolphe, he closed the door after him, and opening another door opposite to it, (for the closet was scarcely two feet deep) he entered into another room in the next house. Here a woman was frying fish with three or four dirty and shoeless brats around her. The apparition, however, of the locksmith and Adolphe by no means disturbed her; she went on frying and scolding, and only returned the "*bon jour*" of the former, as it were in parenthesis. Passing out of this room, they found themselves on another landing; and the locksmith, having led the way down stairs, now entered a room on the ground floor, and, traversing this also, with his simple "*bon jour*," another double closet, or rather closet with two opposite doors, admitted him to the ground floor of a third house. Once more ascending the stairs, he led the way by a similar mode of communication into the landing of a fourth house, and then to the ground floor of a fifth house, from whence they emerged into a yard, which was redolent of the aroma of a cowshed and other rural odours. Adolphe concluded that this must be the place where he had been landed from the vehicle which had conveyed him to the catacombs.

"Well, what do you think of our proficiency in the art of fortification?" said the locksmith.

"Why, I could easily imagine," replied Adolphe, candidly, "that such contrivances as I have seen might be adopted by the *gamins* or *forçats* of Paris for escape from the police; but I can hardly conceive of what service they would be, as defences against military operations."

"Then you have something to learn," returned the locksmith. "The poorer and denser faubourgs of Paris are burrowed after this fashion, in every direction; and what chance can a military force in the streets stand against the inhabitants, who are not only well covered, but who can shift their ground every minute? The troops can neither know what point to attack, or from what point, from moment to moment, a murderous fire may be poured down upon them. And suppose they storm a house, what chance can they have in pursuing, through such a warren, an enemy far better acquainted with its intricacies than themselves; ay, and not only quite as brave, but far more infuriated? The only mode of dislodging such an enemy, would be to burn the faubourgs over their ears; and if such an attempt was made, a savage revenge would be taken for the atrocity. All Paris would be laid in ashes."

"You almost make me tremble," said Adolphe, "at the nature of the conflict which is impending."

"But I have no fear that it will be carried to such extremities," returned the locksmith. "I do not believe that the officers of the troops quartered in Paris would attempt to enforce orders for such a barbarous extermination of the people; and I am sure that the troops would never execute them in a quarrel like this. Indeed, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie dare not permit such orders to be given; for they must be aware that the storming of the Faubourgs of St. Antoine would probably end in the sacking of the Faubourg St. Germain."

They had now left the yard, which the locksmith informed Adolphe belonged to a dairyman. The impression upon the mind of the youth had been, that the coach had conveyed him some distance beyond the suburbs, and, after being driven across some open fields, had been drawn up at a farm house in some ill-paved village. He now, however, gathered from the locksmith, that the coach had never been more than a couple of miles from Porte St. Denis, but that it had been driven hither and thither about the most unfrequented parts of the faubourg, in order to give him a false idea of the locality into which he was to be conducted; and that, for the same purpose, he had been driven several times around a grass paddock belonging to the dairyman, which was not more than a furlong from the place where he had at last alighted. Had he refused to enrol himself a member of the Society, the locksmith informed him that he would have had a similar journey back again, to prevent him from returning any wiser as to the retreat of the Society than he set out.

"But you promised," said Adolphe, "that throughout the journey you would be within three yards of me; and I am certain that no one, either on horseback or in vehicles, accompanied me. Though my eyes were blindfolded, my ears were not quite closed."

"You are quite right," returned the locksmith; "no one accompanied us."

"*Us!*" exclaimed Adolphe; "then where, in the name of Satan, were *you?*"

"On the box," replied the locksmith, with a laugh. "I was your coachman."

"Fool that I was, not to think of such a simple explanation of a seeming contradiction as that!" said Adolphe. "But solve me another riddle; how did you contrive to get me out of the club-room, without my perceiving the steps that lead down into the common room?"

"You did not pass through the common room at all," answered the locksmith; but through a door in the gable end of the room, which forms a portion of the panelling of it, and is therefore invisible, and the road in front of it passes over a levelled mound, the *débris* of some monastic ruins, I believe. But list! stand back! I see some of those fearful 'birds of night' about, whose appearance is strongly ominous of the dawning of our '*bon jour*.'"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE locksmith retired with Adolphe under the cover of a low archway, which led into one of those *cul-de-sacs* which are so numerous in the lower faubourgs of Paris, and directed the attention of his companion to three men, who seemed engaged in earnest conversation, at a corner on the opposite side of the street. As far as Adolphe could judge, from the dim and uncertain light afforded by a lamp, under which they were holding their consultation, they were shabby in dress, and unclean of person; and the seriousness of their manner—so different from the animated and theatrical manner common even to the lowest class of Parisians, when the subject of discourse is only upon ordinary topics—showed that they were profoundly deliberating upon the execution of some hazardous and questionable adventure.

"Let us watch them for a minute or two," whispered the locksmith. "If these men are about what I suspect, it will be necessary for us to hasten our preparations."

The three men seemed to be anxiously expecting the arrival of others; and in a short time they were joined by about a dozen confederates, but who certainly did not belong to the same class as themselves. Two or three were broad-shouldered labourers, in a very ragged condition, and the others were mere youths, dressed in caps and blouses. By and by, Adolphe heard some grating sounds proceed from the centre of the group, as if a pavier was endeavouring to loosen the pavement by the action of a crowbar. These, however, soon ceased, and the party dis-

persed as indifferently as street passengers generally do after they have stopped for a minute or two to observe what some workmen may be about.

"Let us cross over," said the locksmith, "and see what they have been after."

They did so; but Adolphe could observe no traces of the fellows' occupation. It was not so, however, with the more experienced locksmith. By trying the ground upon which they had been standing with his foot, he discovered that a single stone had been displaced from the pavement, and removed out of the way, so as neither to attract notice nor cause obstruction. Several other of the adjoining stones had also been loosened.

"What a nose these *scélérats* have for an impending insurrection!" remarked the locksmith.

"Who and what are they?" inquired Adolphe.

"The first three you noticed," replied the locksmith, "are no doubt escaped *forçats;* and a stranger to the mysteries of Paris, who had only been able to make the general observation that they never were seen abroad except on the eve of some sanguinary struggle, would conclude that they must issue on such occasions out of the very bowels of the earth. And the prescience they have of such awful occurrences would make one conclude that they are prompted in their notions, not by human reasoning, but by ferocious brute instinct. It is impossible that they can have any accurate conception of the nature and progress of the conspiracy, and yet they have divined the time of the crisis within a very few hours; for it is not likely to be suspended over to-morrow, and they have set about their preliminary part in the work with as much exactness as if they had received the most specific directions."

"Is not the coincidence," said Adolphe, "to be more easily accounted for by their premature interference precipitating the crisis?"

"There may be some truth in that suggestion," replied the locksmith.

"But still," continued Adolphe, "I do not see any very important preparations, in which they are lending a hand to-night."

"Why, certainly," returned the locksmith, "they have only removed a single stone in this spot to-night; but that stone is the first stone of a barricade, and when its removal is observed at daylight, it will be recognised as an invitation to form one. Those three fellows in the crushed hats and long cloaks have been marking out the work for the *gamins* on the morrow, and excellent judges they are of the points where it will be most embarrassing for the military to find all communications intercepted."

"And what causes you to anticipate that the crisis cannot be suspended over to-morrow?" asked Adolphe.

"Because I could perceive more than once to-day a symptom that the women of St. Antoine and the Poissonnerie are growing impatient, and there is no further parleying when they once begin," answered the locksmith. "No class of women in the world stick to their business better than they do; and when they do leave, as I observe they have done to-day, the mischief is very near at hand. They don't understand the word 'parleying;' and the men, aware of this amiable weakness, are thus compelled to begin the work sooner perhaps than they otherwise would have done, for the mere sake of taking it out of their hands. But here we are at home, and after we have taken a slight supper, you had better retire early to bed. I shall return and sleep at *ma mère's* myself, but I shall be out late."

Adolphe was not sorry to find himself once more comfortably seated in the club-room of the worthy *Compagnonnage des Serruriers;* and it was an additional relief that they were to have no other company. Annette waited upon them as usual, but was unusually silent, and in less than half-an-hour the locksmith took

his departure. Left to himself, Adolphe drew near the fire, and, resting his forehead upon his hand, began to reflect upon all the strange scenes in which he had been either an actor or witness during his yet brief sojourn in Paris. Although his mind was thoroughly made up not to waver from the engagements into which he had been led by André Jacquot, he could not help confessing to himself at times that he should have thought better of them, if he had entered into them after more deliberation. Whatever dash of repentance, however, there might have been in the transitory impressions, it neither weakened his resentment against what he conceived to be the oppression of bourgeois mortgagees upon the *propriétaire* class to which he belonged, nor his indignation against a system of government which had subjected his friend Gaspard Ferrete to such grievous cruelties and wrongs. "It cannot be right," he said, mentally, "that such an abominable system should continue, and it therefore cannot be wrong to lend a hand to its destruction."

This sort of logic, however, though he endeavoured to persuade himself that it convinced his judgment, was not altogether sufficient to satisfy the suggestions of his feelings. There was MARIE! Marie, whose existence he had bound up with his own—had he ever once considered her in coming to those momentous decisions which involved their common fate? What would *she* say—what would she feel—if she was aware of the hazard to which he had committed their common happiness? and was he justified, in love or honour, in concealing from her so important a change in their situation? In vain he endeavoured to escape from these questionings of conscience, by arguing with himself that it would be cruel, as well as useless, to inform Marie of the dangers into which he had been decoyed; for the same question still returned in another shape: ought not his regard for her to have been a sufficient argument to restrain him from involving himself in that danger? "Well, well," he said, at last, "it will all

be over in a day or two, and then we shall know the worst; and, till then, it is folly to speculate upon the chances, whether I have done best for Marie's happiness, or not."

"You are very meditative to-night," said Annette, who had been contemplating him, unobserved, for more than a minute.

Adolphe turned round in his chair with a start, for in his abstraction he had forgotten for the moment where he was.

"I was not aware that there was such good company in the room, Mademoiselle," he answered; "for I would have preferred communing just now with any person's thoughts rather than with my own."

Annette closed the door, and drew a chair opposite to him.

"I could have wished, Master Renouard, that you had reflected sooner, and then your thoughts might have been less disagreeable to you," said Annette.

"If you suppose that I have been reflecting upon the cause I have espoused, with a diminished conviction of its justice, or a wavering determination to uphold it, you do me a great injustice —an injustice which I am sure you would not do Colonel Mercier.."

"Believe me, Master Renouard," returned the maiden, "I intended no such insinuation; and, so far from doing you an injustice, in assuming that your thoughts on the subject alluded to cannot be very agreeable, I was only giving you credit for feelings which I entertain myself."

"And may I ask, Mademoiselle," said Adolphe, "what is the nature of these feelings?"

"Yes," she replied, openly; "for I shall find relief in comparing hearts openly with one whom I conceive to be in a situation somewhat similar to my own. I feel that I have much to reproach myself with; and loving with sincerity and honour, as you do, I am sure that you must feel yourself in that predicament too."

"I will make a clean breast, Mademoiselle," said Adolphe, "if you will direct my attention to the point on which I am to confess."

"Consider, then," returned Annette, with emotion, "the nature of my position with Colonel Mercier. I have told you his horror of civil war, and yet has he committed himself to a rebellion; and for what? For *me*. It is true that I have not only not persuaded him into this step, but that I have continually and earnestly dissuaded him from it; but he has been influenced, nevertheless, by affection for me. As to my uncle's part in this conspiracy, I am so far from condemning, that I applaud him for it. Nay, as a conscientious Legitimist, I should have despised him for his disloyalty, or his want of courage, if he had acted otherwise. But it was quite different with Colonel Mercier. There was no necessity for his interfering at all; and I am satisfied that he would have remained neuter in the struggle, as far as a soldier *can* do so, had he not felt the greatest reluctance to expose himself to the chance of being called upon to act in a matter of bloody arbitrament on the side opposed to my nearest and dearest relative, and only guardian in the world. It was this that decided him; and though, as a brave man, he will be ready to meet all the consequences of his act without a murmur, I cannot help remembering what those consequences will be if he is unsuccessful. Not merely loss of rank and prospects, and even life, but, in the eyes of many, loss of honour; for I need not tell you that the patriot degenerates, with the mass of mankind, into the traitor, when tyranny is strong enough to inflict upon him a traitor's punishment. And in all this I am the innocent cause of involving him."

"I cannot deny," returned Adolphe, "that there is much justice in what you say, or wonder that it should be a source of painful reflection to you. But, at any rate, you have this consolation—though the cause, you *are* only the *innocent* cause."

"No, Master Renouard," replied Annette; "that is no con-

solation to me, because it will not ward off or mitigate the blow that may be inflicted on *his* happiness, which, by every sacred tie, ought to be my *only* consideration. And now tell me, whether no feeling of this kind harasses you when you think of what you owe to your affianced bride, and how you may have wantonly, by rash engagements, put it out of your power to discharge the debt?"

Adolphe covered his face with his hands, and groaned audibly. At last he said,—

"It is too true, Mademoiselle—too true; and I shall not think a life of the most tender affection—if that life should be spared—sufficient to compensate my Marie for the error."

"But, at any rate," returned Annette, taking him kindly by the hand, "the sincerity of repentance is best proved by beginning the work of atonement at once."

"But how?" said Adolphe.

"How!" exclaimed Annette. "By retreating at once. It is not too late. You have compromised yourself by no act, at present. Leave Paris this very night, and keep yourself, for *her* sake, unscathed by the storm which is already growling over our heads."

Adolphe stared at her wildly, as if unable to comprehend her meaning; for a pause was required before he could arrange his thoughts so as to see clearly how Annette's proposition bore upon his present situation. Then the recollection of the terrible engagement into which he had so solemnly entered with the tribunal of the Société de la Rouge in the catacombs, only an hour or two before, flashed across his mind, and he exclaimed, in agony:

"I cannot—it is impossible—utterly impossible; and besides, there would be more certain danger in retreating than going forward."

"That *cannot* be," vehemently urged the maiden. "Gaspard Ferrete—he, so capable of the most noble sacrifices—would not

be incensed by your retreating if the whole matter was explained to him. I will appeal to him myself, and, I am sure, with success. And as for André Jacquot, he will only have lost a proselyte. Leave *me* to make your peace with him; and again I implore you to leave Paris this night."

"I can only repeat," reiterated Adolphe, "that it is impossible —that I am—" and he paused.

"What? What are you?" said Annette, with impatient solicitude.

"I cannot, must not tell you," sighed the youth; and he turned deadly pale at the remembrance of the mysteries of the catacombs.

"Merciful heavens!" exclaimed Annette; "there is more in this than is fit to meet the ear. Unhappy youth! to what demon have you sold yourself, that the very memory of your contract with him freezes the blood in your veins, and communicates a chill of vague and undefined horror to those around you?"

"Have pity on me, and mention the subject no more!" entreated the youth, with a shudder which seemed to shake his whole frame.

"I must—I must," responded Annette. "Nay, Master Renouard, remember for whom I plead. No engagement can be so sacred on earth as that which you have made to *her;* and if you have made an impious one, under some dreadful delusion, it would be sinful not to abandon it, now that you are awakened to the real nature of it."

Adolphe was silent for some time, and when he had somewhat regained his composure, he answered, in a melancholy tone,—

"Whatever, my dear friend (for such I may call you without offence)—whatever the nature of the engagement may be, one condition, at least, is that I cannot retreat from it; be assured that there is nothing impious in it—nothing that the purest

patriot might not conscientiously subscribe to. And may I urge you to let this explanation suffice?"

Annette rose, and gave him her hand, with a look of sorrowful disappointment, and Adolphe, a few minutes afterwards, retired to his bed-room, unwilling to run the chance of encountering the locksmith again on his return.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE soldier, it is said, sleeps soundly on the eve of a battle which he knows to be unavoidable. Wife, children, and all that constitutes the *home*, which are ever present to him on less momentous occasions, are then banished from his thoughts, not by any physical or intellectual effort, but by a sense of the utter inutility of regretting the dangers of the morrow, which may separate him from them for ever. Neither horrible conjurations of "the worst that may happen" disturb his repose: his dreams are not of the impending tumult and carnage, nor of the widowed woman of his heart, and of his fatherless young ones around her. His visions are all retrospective of past happiness—of the joyous sports of his boyhood, of the transports of early love, and the calmer felicity of conjugal delights. There is a psychological mystery in all this which we should in vain endeavour to penetrate. Even the culprit, who knows that in a few hours he must suffer that doom from which humanity shrinks with horror—the death of a dog by the foul hands of the hangman—passes those few hours in tranquil slumber; ay, even though the most dreadful guilt may oppress his soul in his waking moments; and he is conscious that he will only be aroused to answer for it before a tribunal, to the terrors of which those of any earthly tribunal are but as shadows which pass without scathing.

So was it with Adolphe Renouard. He retired to his chamber, and threw himself, without undressing, on his bed, not daring to hope "Sleep, gentle sleep, nature's soft nurse, would close his eye-lids down, and steep his senses in forgetfulness." Nay, more—

he did not desire to sleep, lest he should be haunted and unnerved by phantoms from the catacombs and ominous pre-visions of the horrors of the coming struggle. But Nature cheated him out of his inclinations and his fear. He soon fell into a profound but calm slumber, which, instead of being disturbed by any uneasy consciousness of the present, or any fearful prefigurations of the future, carried him back to the little homestead at Autun, and busied his imagination with the occupations and pleasures of the days when he had known none of the pangs and temptations of strife and discontent.

So, too, was it throughout Paris at large. People retired to rest at their accustomed hours; and though throughout the day a general inquietude, amounting to a positive assurance of the proximity of some great catastrophe, had pervaded the community, they slept as soundly as did the people of Pompeii in the midst of that heavy meteorological gloom which was the harbinger of the visitation which was to overwhelm them, and their places, and their temples, and their green fields, and glorious gardens, with an eternal darkness. On that evening, all was as gay at the Tuileries as ever, and, as the night advanced, the decorous etiquette of the Court had broken up the festive board at the usual hour of discretion. In spite of the agitation of men's minds, you might imagine that, by common consent, they had resolved that sufficient for the day was the evil thereof, and that the morrow should take care of itself.

The only exceptions to this universal state of repose were small knots of men—such as have been described in the last chapter—who might be met with here and there in consultation, but who never tarried long enough in one spot, or appeared to have anything serious enough in hand to elicit particular notice;—they were, however, plying their occupation of selecting and marking the sites for barricades, in the event of an outbreak, very industriously, nevertheless.

The sun had already risen when Adolphe Renouard awoke, and, even then, it was some time before he could dissuade himself from believing that his dreams during the night had been the realities, and that he was only now relapsing into the continuance of a dream which had haunted him before.

But he looked out of the window and saw Notre Dame gloomily frowning over the abominations of the City, and returned to a painful consciousness of his actual situation, and the impossibility of escaping from it, except by passing through the ordeal to which he voluntarily condemned himself. "It is of no earthly use, however, to stand here striking a balance between the good and evil of the chance I have chosen. I will go down stairs, and, if André Jacquot is not there, write a letter to Marie—my last adieu, in case I should fall."

On descending into the club-room he found Annette, who received his morning salutation more cheerfully than he could have expected after their conversation of the preceding night.

"Is Master Jacquot up, Mademoiselle?" he inquired.

"He has been gone more than an hour," she replied; "and left word that he shall not return for you before nine o'clock."

"That is fortunate," said Adolphe; "for I wish to write a letter home, and perhaps you will furnish me with materials."

"You would make but a poor man of business," said Annette. 'Who would ever think, the first thing in the morning, of sitting down to write to their correspondents in the country without first inquiring for his letters *from* them?"

"Pshaw!" replied Adolphe; "I expect no letters from them; for I am ashamed to say, that I have so far forgotten them that I have not even sent them my address."

"Then, in my opinion, some one must have done so for you," returned Annette; "unless, indeed, I can suppose that, not finding the political intrigues of so quiet a place as Paris sufficient to

occupy your time, intrigues of another kind have been necessary to keep up your spirits in the absence of your Marie."

"Permit me to say, Mademoiselle," said Adolphe, rather nettled by the last insinuation, "that the latter supposition is as unjust as the former is impossible. I repeat, that it is impossible that I can have any correspondent from the country, because none of my friends know where a letter would find me; and that it is equally impossible that I can have any correspondent in Paris, except, indeed, it be Gaspard Ferrete."

"Well, there is the letter: it is certainly from a lady; and a perusal of it will enable you to discover which of the aforesaid impossibilities has come to pass."

Adolphe took the proffered letter from Annette, and saw at a glance that the superscription was Marie's. He turned it backwards and forwards in his hand with amazement, for, as it bore no post-mark, he could not divine by what conveyance it could have reached him; and this was an additional mystery to her discovering his place of abode.

But he was destined to be infinitely more surprised by the matter of the letter, than at the manner of its coming to hand. It ran as follows:—

"My dearest Adolphe,

"At the moment of our parting, I assured you that, in the hour of danger, I would be with you in spirit. You are in danger —great danger now, and I redeem my pledge. Dearest Adolphe, not one thought of mine shall stray from you until I hear that you are in safety.

"The person who has informed me of the peril in which you are involved, is involved in the same peril himself: but he is high-minded and generous, and would save you from the consequences of a sacrifice, which, though it be called for from *him*, is not from *you*. I pray you, then, to abandon the business you are engaged

in; a prayer, which my faith in your love assures me will be complied with, or I should die.

"Yours, till that day, dearest Adolphe,

"MARIE."

The oftener Adolphe perused this letter, the more his perplexity increased. Who could have been Marie's informant of his communications with the locksmith and its consequences? At the first blush, he suspected Annette; but she it could not be, for the party alluded to in the letter was of the other sex. But then again, who, except her, in all Paris, could be aware of his engagement with Marie? To be sure, there was Gaspard Ferrete; but it was he who designedly introduced him to the locksmith, and had never shown any regret for the success which had attended the scheme of which he was the author. And yet he might, in secret, feel some compunction for what he had done. The more the young man turned the matter over in his mind, the more inexplicable it appeared to him. At last he resolved to try if he could not fish out something from Annette.

"Will you be so kind, Mademoiselle," he said, "as to inform me who delivered this letter here?"

"It was brought here," replied Annette, "by a soldier, who delivered it to my aunt. The soldier also left his own respects to Master Adolphe Renouard, with whom he professed to have some slight acquaintance. But let me hope that the letter contains no bad news?"

"None whatever, either good or bad, for it only tells me what I knew before," said Adolphe, with a forced smile; "but still, that it should contain what it does, is to me the most unaccountable thing possible."

At this moment, the locksmith interrupted their further conversation, to the evident chagrin of Annette, which did not escape the observation of the former. He fixed his eyes upon Adolphe,

and perceiving in his countenance, too, an expression of embarrassment, he said, rather sharply,—

"I suppose, Mademoiselle, you have been lecturing Master Renouard upon the danger of Parisian intrigues, as he was out rather late last night; but I can assure you that he was in the last company in the world for his rustic virtue to be in danger."

Neither Annette nor Adolphe knew what to make of this speech—which might be very pertinent to some of Annette's recent remarks, or not. As people generally do in such a predicament, they looked at each other for a clue to his meaning; but the locksmith, without noticing these telegraphic cross-interrogatories, proceeded.

"Heyday! and the breakfast untouched? Come, Master Renouard, despatch must be the order of the day,—unless you prefer remaining here to amuse Mademoiselle with your last night's adventures."

Adolphe could make no reply to this insinuation, and he could not but feel how galling it might prove to be exposed to them—tied down, as he was, by his oath, neither by word or deed to hazard the secrets of the Society of the Catacombs. He therefore turned away, in sullen silence, to the breakfast-table, and, after taking a little coffee, announced that he was at the locksmith's command.

"Come," said the locksmith, as soon as they had left the house; "let us walk briskly onward: it is indeed a glorious day, considering how young the year is, and all Paris will turn out to make a holiday of it, of one sort or another. The bourgeois guard, I can tell you—for I have been reconnoitering—are looking very important and serious, just like men who have some weighty charge entrusted to them, and would rather be well rid of the burden. The municipal guard, too, are moving, or rather, being moved, about as if it was necessary to be on the alert, but without knowing where or for what; and the troops are cursing in

their throats because they are confined to their barracks, after an early muster, without knowing why."

"I should presume, then," said Adolphe, "that the government have expected, and are prepared for, an *émeute*."

"No, no!" returned the locksmith, "they are not so wise. They are only thinking of a little discipline for the troops, a little test of the fidelity of the municipal and national guards, and a little—or great—demonstration of the force of government against the people. As far as the troops are concerned, they are just as wise as the boy in the excellent fable which Gaspard Ferrete must have taught you—the fable of 'The Boy and the Wolf.'"

"You think, then, Master Jacquot," said Adolphe, in a tone of inquiry, "that the government have been wrong in thus vexing the troops by unnecessary alarms?"

"I do," answered the locksmith. "These men call themselves statesmen, but they are, really, merely men for a bureau. But there is a great difficulty in this question of keeping troops under arms. I have studied it anxiously, and am convinced that the troops in Paris will this day desert the government, which relies so much upon their obedience, in marching to the Champs Elysées, to make a parade of fidelity to our most cunning of all the Louis, since the day when Louis XI. trusted Oliver le Bain and Cardinal Balue. The Barber and the Jesuit were hardly more intolerant of the service imposed upon them by the eleventh Louis of the sixteenth century, than the military are of the ceremonies inflicted on them by Louis Philippe I. of the nineteenth."

"I cannot understand that," briefly observed Adolphe.

"Ay, ay!" said the locksmith, "they understand these matters much better in England. I have been there, and seen with what delicacy the thing is managed there. The troops in London, for instance, are never brought forth as a demonstration of the physical force to awe the people. They merely form a

part of a pageant for the people; and the humblest citizen knows that while the horse of the stalwart life-guardsman is dancing and switching his tail, the noble animal is taught not to tread on the toes of even a child. The troops, then, when they are brought out, only smile at the stupid terror of some timid countryman, and enjoy the joke, and the cockneys join in the sport. This sort of military duty in a large city is pleasant; but what is it *here?* The most disgusting service ever required from military men; for even the pretorian guards of Old Rome knew that if they were slaves for the time, they could throw off their bondage in a moment, and choose a fresh tyrant to-morrow, and change him for another the next day, if they should choose."

"That explains, then," said Adolphe, "why so renowned a politician as Louis Philippe is not content without such a counter-safeguard as the national guards."

"You are not very far wrong," replied the locksmith; "but you will see to-day—if all occurs as I expect it will—that Louis Philippe *thinks* he is playing off one force against the other; but he is equally mistaken in the character of both. The national guardsman is brave—brave as an eagle—when he is fighting for his nest—his shop and his trinkets. It is, just now, Louis' policy to respect his *bijouterie* and *chemiserie*, and to bring down the troops to clear the streets of us with *mitraille*. Then the national guardsman will think of his windows and his stock-in-trade, which convert almost empty houses into fine streets, and he will protest, and he will fraternize; and then he will interpose his civil remonstrances against military violence, and the military will listen willingly to reason, and——but here comes Colonel Mercier. I must speak to him, if he gives me a sign."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE locksmith and Adolphe had just entered on the Boulevard through the Porte St. Martin, when the former recognised Colonel Mercier approaching them, apparently in a direction from the Hôtel de Ville. The colonel was attended by three young officers of inferior grade, but with whom he, nevertheless, appeared to be holding a serious conversation.

The locksmith perceived that the colonel was so absorbed in his reflections upon the communications of his staff, that he was about to pass him unnoticed; and he therefore almost dragged Adolphe across the Boulevard, right under their horses' noses.

"*Diable*, General!" said the locksmith. "Do not let your horses trample upon us as the *canaille* were trampled upon of old. I am an honest artisan of Paris, and this is a young cousin of mine from the provinces, to whom I am anxious to show a few of the pleasantries which Paris *can* exhibit on such a good day as this."

"Had you been as discreet as you are hospitable, my friend," replied the colonel, betraying no symptom of recognition before his attendants, "you would have advised your country cousin to leave Paris as soon as he had set foot in it. But, alas! it is not often that young men have good advice offered to them in Paris, and very seldom that they will take it when it is."

There was something so significant in the look which the colonel gave Adolphe, that—knowing the relations subsisting between the gallant officer and the Countess Le Beaume—

(Annette)—he could not help suspecting that the latter must have had some opportunity of communicating to the colonel the advice which she had pressed upon him the previous evening.

"If I had been accessible to good advice," said Adolphe, assuming an air of cheerful confidence, "perhaps I should not have run away from home at all; but, perhaps half the brave fellows who serve in the gallant colonel's regiment might make the same confession, and yet without repenting of their choice?"*

"You are a fine young fugitive, at any rate," said the colonel, smiling. "Here, you workman of Paris, there is a five-franc piece for you, and give your rustic cousin all the amusement with it that it will purchase."

The coin fell at the locksmith's feet, and the colonel, breaking his horse into a canter, rode on towards the Madeleine. The locksmith took up the piece of money, and placed it in his pocket.

"You have made but an indifferent breakfast," said the locksmith, "and must make amends for the deficiency at the next restaurant, if the colonel's coin is of any value."

They proceeded along the Boulevards in the same direction as the colonel had done. The morning, as before stated, was a bright and sunny one, and the trees on either side of the broad avenue of houses were giving forth abundant evidence of a precocious spring.

"The trees seem to throw out their buds earlier here than they do further south, which seems to me rather extraordinary," said Adolphe.

"Precocity," returned the locksmith, "predicates short life. I doubt if these trees will ever live to bear leaf again."

"Why so?" asked the youth.

"They have scarcely been growing seventeen years," replied

* It is a mistake to suppose that the French army is now comprised entirely of conscripts. The system of paid substitutes prevails in it as in our own.

the locksmith, "and there is a superstition amongst us Parisians, that they will be coeval with the dynasty under whose auspices they were planted. Such, at least, has hitherto been the fate of all their umbrageous predecessors, and I should not be surprised to see them replaced by another race of saplings before the year has expired. However, here is our restaurant, and let us have a look at something more intelligible than omens."

They entered the house of entertainment, and the locksmith chose a table for their repast in a corner of the room, which had the double advantage of being secluded and well lighted. Having ordered some coffee and such edibles as he thought agreeable, he tendered the *garçon* a Napoleon in payment. To the surprise of Adolphe, the *garçon* returned him two Louis as the difference, saying, "*C'est bien fait, Monsieur, n'est ce pas?*"

"*Oui, mon fils,*" replied the locksmith, and, the *garçon* retiring, he set about leisurely sipping his coffee.

"Did not the *garçon* give you wrong change?" asked Adolphe. "I always thought that a Louis and a Napoleon were of the same value."

"Not in the eyes of some persons," returned the locksmith, smiling; "for you see that some people are willing to give you two Louis for one Napoleon, and treat you into the bargain. *Two Louis! ma foi!* here comes a generous fellow, who, for one Napoleon, would give you not two *Louis*, but a whole sackful of them!"

The person indicated was no other than La Mitraille, the Bonapartist soldier; and Adolphe began to perceive that they were in a house devoted to that party, and that the exchange of monies which had surprised him might be nothing else but a token of understanding.

"You are as punctual, my brave La Mitraille," said the locksmith, "as if you had been summoned to a field-day by *le petit caporal* himself."

"Any news?" asked the other, briefly.

"I have not yet looked at my despatches," replied the locksmith, "but I will examine them at once."

So saying, he took a five-franc piece out of his pocket, and at the same time a small square glass set in a frame, such as is used by the workers of velvet. Having examined the coin with this magnifying instrument, he handed them to La Mitraille, who went through the same operation.

"Nothing could be better," observed the latter, when he had finished his scrutiny—"the surprise will be complete."

"Just so," said the locksmith. "What think you, Master Renouard? (handing him the coin and the glass) though, by the by, La Mitraille, our young friend is not, at present, a very good judge of the bearings of the country."

Adolphe examined the five-franc piece (which was the same that Colonel Mercier had thrown to the locksmith), and in the obverse (which was almost worn plain) perceived the words "Pont Neuf" were engraved in characters which, though extremely minute, were easily deciphered by the aid of the small but powerful microscopic instrument.

"But, *diable!*" said the veteran, as the locksmith seemed to dally over his coffee; "we have no time to spare, and especially if I am to undergo the desired introduction to M. Boisson. *Peste!* I don't like the man. He is little better than a Chorian turned terrorist; but I suppose we must not be nice about our allies until the affair is over."

"I am waiting for a little more intelligence," said the locksmith, drily; and he had scarcely finished the sentence, when the *garçon* placed a small packet in his hands. The locksmith opened it, and, after reading the enclosure, muttered to himself—"So much the better," and then announced to his companions that he was ready to depart.

A smart walk soon brought them to M. Boisson's residence, with

the interior of which the reader is already familiar. The worthy democrat was alone, in the same apartment where Adolphe had first met him, and seemed as if he had been fretting under almost savage impatience.

"A thousand curses, Master Jacquot, will have to be done penance for on the rascally bourgeoisie to-day, and you are the sinner who must expiate them, for you have made me exhaust my whole vocabulary of anathemas by keeping me here so long in no better humour than a chained dog."

"You will be all the better for your day's work," replied the locksmith, smiling; "for I shall be surprised if you do not find it a little sharper—not than you would desire—but than you expect."

"Eh! What now?" ejaculated Boisson. "Are they prepared for us, then? or is there any screw loose amongst ourselves? If any of those scribbling knaves have been falling out about the skin before we have killed the bear, I'll skin some of *them* before long, as surely as that I am born of a woman, which is the surest article of faith I can swear by."

"Read that," returned the locksmith, handing him the enclosure of the packet which he had received at the restaurant.

Boisson almost snatched the paper from the locksmith's hand, and, retiring to the windows, seemed to devour its contents.

"Ho! ho!" he cried. "So his most astute Majesty thinks that it would not be showing his sense of the favours of fortune, if he let slip such a fine opportunity of giving us a taste of his quality, considering, perhaps, that we have forgotten the smack of it, since he treated us with a feast of grape-shot and cannon-balls in the streets, sixteen years ago!"

"Such is the case," returned the locksmith; "and if we did not make our appearance at the feast he is preparing for us, he will be sadly disappointed. I fear, however, that he has not well

calculated the number or the appetites of the guests who will invite themselves on this occasion to the *route*."

Boisson laughed boisterously at the locksmith's sally; and then, tossing off a full half-pint of brandy at a gulp, seemed quite another man. He became instantly at once serious and cheerful.

"I must be off directly, dear Jacquot," he said, "and prepare a few of our friends for the honour his Majesty intends for us. Indeed, I must have them here first, as you know, to equip them for the feast, and to give them a little lecturing beforehand as to the manner in which they ought to conduct themselves. We meet at one, by the Porte St. Martin."

"Let me first introduce to you our friend La Mitraille," interterposed the locksmith.

"Hah! the brave La Mitraille! Pledge me"—and he poured out four bumpers of his favourite liquor.

"Here's to General La Mitraille! for *General* La Mitraille will certainly dine at the Hôtel de Ville, with the provisional government, to-morrow."

The locksmith and Adolphe just acknowledged the toast by raising the glasses to their lips; but La Mitraille, with an air of stiffness rather than modesty, excused himself from drinking to his own health. He could not, however, refuse to shake hands with M. Boisson, as they were taking their departure.

As they were passing along the Rue Rivoli, Adolphe said to the locksmith, "I am glad to hear that the king is on his guard, and that we are to have a fair pitched battle instead of a surprise."

"*He*, at any rate," replied the locksmith, "has no idea of a pitched battle. The opposition in the Chamber of Deputies has presumed of late a great deal on their being backed by the physical force of the masses, and the king thinks of curing them of the delusion by showing them how easily he can reduce that

force to order. This makes him court a collision—for he does not dream of a *conflict*—with it. We will see, however."

"And what do the opposition think of the matter?" asked Adolphe.

"Why, what must a set of poltroons think, when they know that they are playing dangerous antics between two fires?' answered the locksmith. "A conflict between the government and the people would be annihilation to them, let the battle go how it might. If the king triumphed over the people, he would thenceforth trample upon his parliamentary opposition; and, if the people triumphed over the king, they would send the whole Chamber of Deputies to the devil as well as *him*. *Pauvres miserables!* The opposition might well be of so many dozens of minds, whether they would have their banquet or not."

As Adolphe, the locksmith, and La Mitraille were making their way back in the direction of Notre Dame, the former could not help observing that the stream of pedestrians set strongly in the opposite one. Nor was it unfrequently that a smile of recognition passed between the locksmith and the groups which they met. By the time they had reached the Hôtel de Ville, he calculated that many thousands must have gone on towards the Champs-Elysées,—a circumstance which he could hardly reconcile with an imminent general revolt. About the Hôtel de Ville, too, all was apparently quiet; there were neither throngs of people, nor any unusual military display; while, from the other side of the river, not a sound was wafted indicative of any extraordinary bustle or preparation.

Adolphe communicated the observations to the locksmith. The latter smiled.

"In less than an hour the scene will be changed," he said; "but you do not observe well. You have failed to mark that there is no one at work—no one lounging or cheapening in the

shops; that there is, in short, what you would call an unaccountable suspension of business."

"It is about the general hour of dinner," said Adolphe.

"It is," returned the locksmith—"and not a bad hint; for if we do not dine very soon ourselves, we shall stand a chance of missing that meal for once."

With this remark, the locksmith led his companions to a *cabaret* in the neighbourhood, where they availed themselves of such fare as the house afforded; and, having hastily washed it down with a little wine, they made their way into the main thoroughfare leading to the appointed place of rendezvous with M. Boisson.

M. Boisson was on the spot; but all was as undisturbed there as elsewhere.

"Welcome, friends," said M. Boisson; "rest here five minutes, and I will introduce you to some persons who will be your colleagues for the afternoon."

He left them, and turned into the faubourg. In less than the time promised, he returned with about a dozen men, some of whom wore the uniform of the national guard, others of the municipal guard, and the rest of Colonel Mercier's regiment. The ceremony of introduction having been hastily gone through, he addressed them briefly, as follows:—

"Wait with patience till I send the force you are to lead, and then act with energy."

At this moment a subdued voice reached them, like the distant booming of the ocean.

"Do you hear, La Mitraille?" said the locksmith.

"Stand quiet?" returned La Mitraille. "M. Boisson, bring up your reserve with as little clatter as possible, and quick, for yonder comes the scout!"

Boisson darted back into the faubourg; and in two or three minutes a torrent of men poured into the Boulevard. They

remained, however, perfectly quiet until Boisson, at a signal from La Mitraille, waved a red flag above his head—and then there arose such a tremendous roar of human voices, that Adolphe was almost horror-struck at the idea of the tremendous and savage force of which it was the exponent. Then again there was silence for a moment—the silence of expectation; for that mighty crowd was as yet ignorant what blow was to be struck, and where. Boisson, towering above them, at last, once more, at a signal from La Mitraille, waved his flag, and, in a voice of thunder, gave the word,—"To the Hôtel de Ville!" "To the Hôtel de Ville! To the Hôtel de Ville—*Ca ira! Ca ira!*" responded the myriads, in terrific chorus; and the mass, after rocking to and fro for a few seconds, like some huge vessel settling itself before it answers to the breeze, began to move on.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE general inference drawn from Louis Philippe's *antecedents* is that he did not, in the first instance, regret the great eruption in the ashes of which his dynasty was destined to be buried, but that he rather invited it, as an occasion for striking another grand *coup d'état*, like that of 1832. Hence it was, that so few apparent demonstrations were made by the government of its powers of repression, while, in fact, the most careful preparations were made to crush the insurrectionary spirit of the Parisian *canaille*, should they be induced to offer a justification for attacking them. Thus, although, as noticed in a preceding chapter, there were no outward signs of military activity about the Hôtel de Ville, a strong force had been quietly introduced into it during the previous night, and, on the other side of the river, still stronger detachments were garrisoned and under arms at various points, in such a manner as, in the opinion of the government, they could keep up their communications, and, by concerted action, crush the insurgents in detail.

But disaffection, not to say treachery, had been contagious among the two powerful arms of the king's power—the municipal and national guards—and even the regular troops were much indisposed for an almost purposeless conflict with the people. The question at issue—an extension of the suffrage—was not one which interested them much either way, and there was little glory to be acquired, even by the most decisive victory over their own countrymen. The regular troops, indeed, much disliked such a duty as keeping the *gamins* of Paris in order—an occu-

pation which they considered much more fitting for the bourgeoisie national guards, who had a direct interest in preventing the smashing of the shop windows, and other insurrectionary movements of a similar character. Again, it must be remembered that the French troops of the line are recruited from the provincial peasantry, all of whose associations and traditions are connected with the brilliant achievements of Napoleon; and it was therefore by no means difficult for the Bonapartist section of the conspirators to obtain early and correct information of all the military movements of Louis Philippe in the metropolis.

It was thus that the fact of the Hôtel de Ville having been filled with armed men under the cover of night, became known through the agency of La Mitraille; and that another strong body was secreted near the Chamber of Deputies, with the intention of their reinforcing each other as necessity might require. Against these preparations, the conspirators ventured upon a bold and successful counter manœuvre; that is, to have two insurrections at the same moment, which would keep the military divided, while the insurgents would, at any moment, be able to effect a junction by merely carrying one of the bridges.

"To the Hôtel de Ville! To the Hôtel de Ville!" cried the multitude, led on by Boisson, La Mitraille, and the locksmith. The possession of the Hôtel de Ville has been always regarded by the Parisians as the decision of their insurrectionary battles; because from thence, and thence only, they imagine it to be possible legally to *improvise* a new form of government.

Boisson, however, and his confederates, had no idea of at once attempting to storm the Hôtel de Ville. The possession of the bridge near it was of far more consequence to them, because they knew that the government depended upon the troops at the Hôtel de Ville flying to the succour of their comrades at the Chamber of Deputies, in case the mob there should prove overwhelming. The *tactique*, therefore, of the conspirators was to keep the

troops on the right bank of the river, where they were, until they had themselves achieved such a measure of success as might induce both the regular and municipal military to fraternize with them in their triumph.

When the multitude reached the Place de Grève, Boisson called a sudden halt, and waved his flag towards the bridge.

"See!" he cried, with a stentorian voice, "there are your brethren! Stand, while a few of us go and salute them."

Then, with as much readiness as if they had been assured of a cordial reception, he, the locksmith, La Mitraille, and ten or a dozen others in the uniform of the national guard—though they did not in reality belong to that body—marched up to the foot of the bridge, where a party of artillery with three pieces of ordnance were placed to defend it.

"My brethren," shouted Boisson, addressing the soldiers—"Behold! here are brave national guards who refuse to attack the people, and neither will the brave troops of the line attack the national guard! *Vive* the people! *vive* the brave national guard! and *vive* the brave troops of the line! This is a day for solemnly renewing their bond of fraternity!"

The little party with Boisson raised a loud hurrah! which was responded to by the myriads in the rear. The artillery-men hesitated for a few moments; but when answering hurrahs came back from the direction of the Chamber of Deputies, they threw down their linstocks, and embraced the leading insurgents with delirious transports. There arose another shout of triumph and joy, which might be supposed to startle Hugh Capet in his grave. The guns were quickly transported to the Place de Grève, and turned against the Hôtel de Ville. But there was no necessity for any hostile proceedings: the troops within the building had perfectly conceived what had taken place upon the bridge, and imitated the example of their comrades in fraternizing with the insurrectionists.

Boisson and his confederates rushed into the building, and in a few moments, from the windows above, a shower of printed handbills descended upon the crowd below, announcing the establishment of a republic and the formation of a provisional government, in which the names of André Jacquot, *ouvrier*, and Adolphe Renouard, *propriétaire*, were conspicuous.

Adolphe whispered an objection to the locksmith against being placed in such a prominent position.

"Pshaw!" replied the locksmith, "when the world is turned upside down people cannot help being shifted into strange places. Besides, there will be half a score of lists of provisional governments before to-morrow, and as the great mass of the people will ultimately have to decide for themselves which list has the best pretensions, it is a stroke of policy on my part to have a *propriétaire*, as well as an *ouvrier*, in mine."

There was no time for discussing the point further, for the crowd beneath were becoming impatient for action. No sooner had a single voice uttered the words, "The Chamber," than a deafening call was made—"To the Chamber of Deputies! To the Chamber of Deputies! We must dissolve the Chamber of Deputies!"

"Does the nation decree that the Chamber of Deputies is dissolved?" vociferated Boisson from the window.

"It does! It does!" responded the crowd.

Boisson and his friends of the *soi-disant* provisional government immediately reappeared in the *Place* below; and now Adolphe saw that the passions of a Parisian mob are much more easily excited than controlled. Boisson and the locksmith would fain have persuaded them to march to the Chamber of Deputies with an imposing yet calm attitude, and to take no step against the public peace unless they were attacked; but they might as well have talked to the winds. The whole aspect of the crowd seemed suddenly changed. It appeared to Adolphe as if a preponderating majority of men *en blouse*—reckless and ferocious-

looking fellows—had suddenly sprung up into the midst of it from the bowels of the earth. He had no difficulty in recognizing them as belonging to the class whom the locksmith had pointed out to him, on the preceding evening, as the storm-birds of every insurrection in Paris, but who mysteriously disappeared with the return of order and lawful authority. Nor were they long in commencing their saturnalia. "To the barricades! to the barricades!" they roared; and in an incredibly short space of time they seemed to have dispersed in every direction, and Paris presented the appearance of a city which is preparing against all the horrors of a siege.

Adolphe shuddered at the consequences of such an infuriate set of wretches obtaining the upper hand. "It would be better," he thought, "to endure the despotism of a bourgeois king, which at least had the merit of protecting society against the incursion of these strange visitants to the light of day." He was not aware that, although these miscreants were outlaws, who had almost savage resentments against society, they exercised a sort of chivalrous pride on such occasions in *appropriating* nothing, however much they might destroy. Indeed, except such commodities as might be required for their barricades, and what they considered fair public plunder, as having been acquired by the fraud and oppression of usurpers, they showed a remarkable degree of abstinence, considering what crimes it was in their power to commit without the slightest risk of discovery and punishment.

Boisson and the locksmith, after a brief consultation, determined upon marching with the remainder of their followers upon the Chamber of Deputies, though the former was inclined at first to take the Tuileries in the way, and make a bold dash at royalty in its stronghold. But the locksmith saw that the time had not arrived for that. It was necessary first to cut Louis Philippe off from retreating, by falling back upon the Chambers; a compre-

mise between the king and his parliament might be fatal to the success of the insurrection, and there was only one way of preventing this. If they could break up the Constitution, by compelling the Chamber of Deputies to abdicate their functions, the fall of the Orleans dynasty would be certain. It would no longer have the moral support of a senate professedly speaking the voice of the people; and neither the municipal nor national guard, nor even the army, would be likely to go to extremities in defending the authority of the king when it was no longer backed by that of the legislature.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NEAR the Chamber of Deputies, the success of the insurgents had not been so decisive as in the neighbourhood of the Hôtel de Ville. No actual conflict had taken place, but the military treated the populace with that sort of passive resistance, which is far more likely to damage an insurrection, by procrastinating it, than hard blows, which only have the effect of precipitating a crisis, which should be avoided if possible. The national guard, too, looked on as if they were waiting to see what turn matters would take; and all that the insurgents had achieved in this quarter was, that the Chamber of Deputies had adjourned in the utmost confusion.

"Hem!" said the locksmith to Adolphe, "our position is a more difficult one than I expected; and if the king and his minister are not mad, we shall have some trouble to get at them."

"How so?" asked Adolphe; "for I cannot perceive that they carry things with a very high hand."

"That is it," returned the locksmith. "Your Parisians are as brave as tigers if they are attacked; but it is their fashion to require some provocation before they begin a work of this kind. However, I think that those *gamins en blouse* were right after all, for their barricades are eyesores which the government will probably attempt to remove before to-morrow morning, and the play will commence with them."

The locksmith was not wrong in his surmises. A change had

come over the spirit of the minister's policy, who had by this time discovered that it would be better, as Adolphe expressed himself, not to carry things with a very high hand. It is even asserted, that government servants, who had themselves joined the conspiracy, had conveyed intimations of the fact of such official delinquencies to the insurgents, in order to embarrass and paralyze him; and it is understood that, had the barricades not been resorted to, he would have gladly allowed the storm to blow over, instead of boldly facing it, as he had originally intended to do.

"Let us return towards Porte St. Martin," said the locksmith; "for I can see plainly, that though the battle will end here, it will not begin here. You, however, had better return to your lodgings by the Boulevards, while I go and see how they are getting on at the Hôtel de Ville. I will call for you at seven o'clock."

The locksmith and Adolphe accordingly parted at Porte St. Martin, and the latter made the best of his way towards the house of his hostess. He had not proceeded far, when some one muffled in a large cloak touched him on the shoulder.

"Young man," said the stranger, "I have been waiting for you during the last hour; and I should be obliged by your now waiting upon me for little more than half that time."

"Not unless you first acquaint me with your name and business," stiffly returned Adolphe.

"I approve of your spirit and caution," replied the stranger. "My business is to conduct you to where another person wishes for your presence."

"Then I must first know the name and business of *that* person," again retorted Adolphe.

"That person is a friend," returned the other—"is the Countess Le Beaume. She wishes to see you at the marquis's house, when she will communicate her business in person."

"And you, too, would have no objection to accompany me, Colonel Mercier," said Adolphe, archly; for he had even recognised the colonel's voice.

"I cannot do that," said the colonel, with much agitation; "but I will await your return at this spot, and you will perhaps be kind enough to be the bearer of a message to me, as I have been of one to you."

"As in duty bound, I shall have much pleasure in doing so," responded Adolphe; "but I trust that nothing unpleasant has occurred, as I should augur from your tone and manner."

"Listen," said the colonel. "You saw what took place to-day on the Place de Grève?"

"You mean the fraternization of the artillery corps with the people?" asked the other.

"Yes," answered the colonel. "Of that corps I was the commandant; and I need not say how that transaction has compromised me. All the agents upon whom the government think they can rely, are now busy in seeking me, and I could not visit the marquis's house without being instantly apprehended."

"Why not throw yourself into the Hôtel de Ville? You would be safe from them there, at any rate," said Adolphe.

"That is what I intend to do," said the colonel, "after you have returned to me. Do you see that barricade yonder? Upon second thought, you had better meet me there. And now make what expedition you can. You need not return to your lodgings, for I shall wait here for Master Jacquot, and will take him along with me."

Adolphe vainly endeavoured to conjecture what Annette could want with him—and at the marquis's house, too—except it was to renew her entreaties that he would still withdraw from the enterprise in which he had embarked. That, however, the hought was now impossible, for he was committed to it by a public act as much as the colonel himself; and this, at least, would relieve

him from the unpleasant necessity of combating Annette's arguments.

He was shown into a large room at the marquis's, when Annette soon made her appearance. She wore the same plain and neat dress as at the *cabaret*, but she was more sorrowful than he had ever seen her, not excepting even upon the occasion of the locksmith giving him a narrative of the unfortunate issue of the attachment between her cousin and Gaspard Ferrete. But this, Adolphe thought, was easily accounted for by the communication he had just received from her lover, the colonel.

"I am sorry, Mademoislle, to see you so low spirited," said Adolphe; "but we must all hope for the best, and not anticipate the worst. At any rate, the trial will only be a brief one."

"A brief one for you, if you should fall," she replied; "but one of a life-long wretchedness for your poor Marie."

"I wonder to hear you make so much of this little peril, Mademoiselle," he returned; "for Colonel Mercier, by his profession, is at all times liable to the peril which I shall only have to encounter for one day."

"Can nothing persuade you," she said, "to have more consideration, if not for yourself, at least for her you have vowed to cherish and comfort through life at the sacrifice of any other earthly object? and, alas! she does require comfort, indeed!"

"I am sure you would not needlessly alarm me, Mademoiselle," said Adolphe, in alarm. "In the name of heaven, what has happened to her?"

"She will be alone in the world, if anything should happen to *you*," replied Annette, and handed him a letter.

He opened it with eager haste, and read briefly:—

"DEAREST ADOLPHE,

"I have now no one to look to but you in this wide world, which, since your absence, has appeared to me a cold and cheerless waste. My father is dead, and I have neither mother,

nor brother, nor sister. Oh, do not think me selfish, when I confess that you are tenfold dearer to me than ever, now that I have no one to look up to but you, and yet know the perils to which you have rashly committed yourself. Think of my forlorn state, and retreat from the danger before it is too late.

"Yours for ever,

"MARIE."

So absorbed was Adolphe by his painful reflections upon the contents of this letter, that he did not perceive that Annette had left the room while he was pondering upon it; and she had returned, accompanied by another female, before his fit of abstraction was over.

"Before it is too late!" he groaned. "Alas! it *is* too late."

"Say not so," interposed Annette, gently touching his elbow. "At least, say not so to her."

And then by his side stood his own beautiful Marie, awaiting his answer as a sentence of life or death.

"My Marie, my own lovely Marie, what angel brought you here—or rather what demon—at such a moment as this?"

And he folded her in his arms, and cursed his own folly when he thought of how miserable his answer must make her.

"I will save her the rudeness of replying to such a question," again interposed Annette. "I was the demon who brought her here, where she has been for the last two days. My pleading for her was ineffectual—let her now plead for herself; and again I tell you to remember that she has no one else in the world to love and look up to for protection."

"Alas, alas! it is too late!" he repeated, with a sigh from the inmost recesses of his heart. "Had I but seen you yesterday morning, it would have been different."

"Oh, say not so; say not so, dearest Adolphe," cried the poor girl. "Whatever promises you may have since made to others, your first promise was made to me."

"My only safe side now is on the side of danger!" And he handed to Annette one of the printed handbills, announcing him a member of the provisional government.

"Ah!" exclaimed Annette, "they have indeed hurried you over a precipice!"

"You see, Mademoiselle, now," said Adolphe, "that I am involved in as much danger as Colonel Mercier himself."

"Colonel Mercier? what of him? Speak," cried Annette.

"I am alluding to his fraternizing with the people this afternoon, and that nothing can save him or me now, but the complete success of the insurrection," observed Adolphe; supposing that the colonel must have already communicated this grave fact to Annette himself.

"Oh, hasty, rash, mad!" exclaimed Annette. "And he promised me, too, that he would only let things take their course, and not needlessly implicate himself by precipitating them."

"I do not think that he did precipitate them, but was carried away with the stream," said Adolphe, desirous of saying any thing to comfort the poor girl.

Annette paused for an instant, to master her agitation. Her eyes sparkled and her lips were compressed, as she turned to Marie, and said, with resolute animation.

"Marie, we are now sharers in one common danger and one common grief, and must act together. Master Renouard, you expected to carry back a message to Colonel Mercier, but I shall carry it myself, and Marie shall accompany us. I have pleaded for her to you; she shall now plead for me to him. Where are you to meet him?

"I could not hear of either of you accompanying me there. There is danger—great danger: our place of meeting is near one of the barricades."

"I care not where it is," protested Marie. "If you are there, there will I be too."



DEATH OF THE LOCKSMITH AND THE COLONEL.

"You are right, Marie," said Annette. "We will accompany Master Renouard."

Adolphe saw that further opposition would be fruitless; for if they persisted in following him, what could he do? He could not leave them unprotected in the streets on such a night as he feared this would be, and as soon as they had hastily equipped themselves, he departed with them for the place of rendezvous with Colonel Mercier and the locksmith.

The evening had now fallen in; but the Boulevards were excessively crowded. Not that there was any bustle, for the crowds seemed to have come abroad to await in silent expectation some dreaded convulsion. Adolphe and his trembling companions made their way to the Porte St. Martin, without meeting any further cause for alarm than this unwonted attitude of the populace; but they had scarcely emerged in the faubourg, when sounds struck upon their ears, which, for a few moments, made them hesitate in their course.

"What can be the cause of all that noise and clamour?" whispered Annette to him.

"It is doubtless the mob," he replied, "cheering each other on in their hasty work at the barricades."

Annette instantly dragged the reluctant youth forward with redoubled speed, and in a few minutes they reached the street which was the scene of the insurrectionists' labours. They were working by torchlight, which revealed everything that was passing to view. The street was not crowded, but, on the contrary, the whole populace in the neighbourhood seemed to have either retired behind the barricade, or to have posted themselves at the windows of the lofty and dingy houses; and Adolphe, therefore, had no difficulty in discovering the objects of his search.

Scarcely, however, had they reached them—scarcely had a word of recognition passed between them, when the heavy tramp of horses and the rumbling of carriages was heard in the direction of the *embouchure* of the street which they had just entered.

"Good God! what will become of you?" exclaimed the colonel, who well divined the storm which was coming. "Stand back, all of you, close to the wall, and let them pass."

But when the troop, which was accompanied by a couple of field pieces, was within twenty yards of them, a volley was fired at them from the first floor of the house where the colonel had run for shelter. The commandant immediately called a halt; one of the heavy guns was turned against the house; a crashing roar, followed by a random volley of small arms, was heard; and Colonel Mercier and the locksmith fell dead at the feet of Annette, whom they were endeavouring to cover!

* * * * * * *

Adolphe, on that eventful night, succeeded in conducting Annette and Marie back in safety. The result of the revolution was not such as to satisfy the royalist old marquis, and he therefore retired to his château in Normandy, with Annette. Adolphe and Marie accompanied them; for what purpose, the reader can conceive. Gaspard Ferrete was, if possible, still more unfortunate than his friend the locksmith, for a subsequent insurrection resulted, as far as he was concerned, in his transportation to Africa. The agent gained little by his plotting in the end: his practices became known when the revolution brought so many secret transactions of the police to light; and, as he was found to have betrayed all parties in turn, France would be no safe place for him under the rule of any one of them. M. Boisson, too, is in the same condition. The only person in our drama who has hitherto had to congratulate himself upon his share in the downfall of the House of Orleans is the gallant old La Mitraille; but, as the philosopher said, we should call no man truly fortunate until he is dead.

THE END.

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